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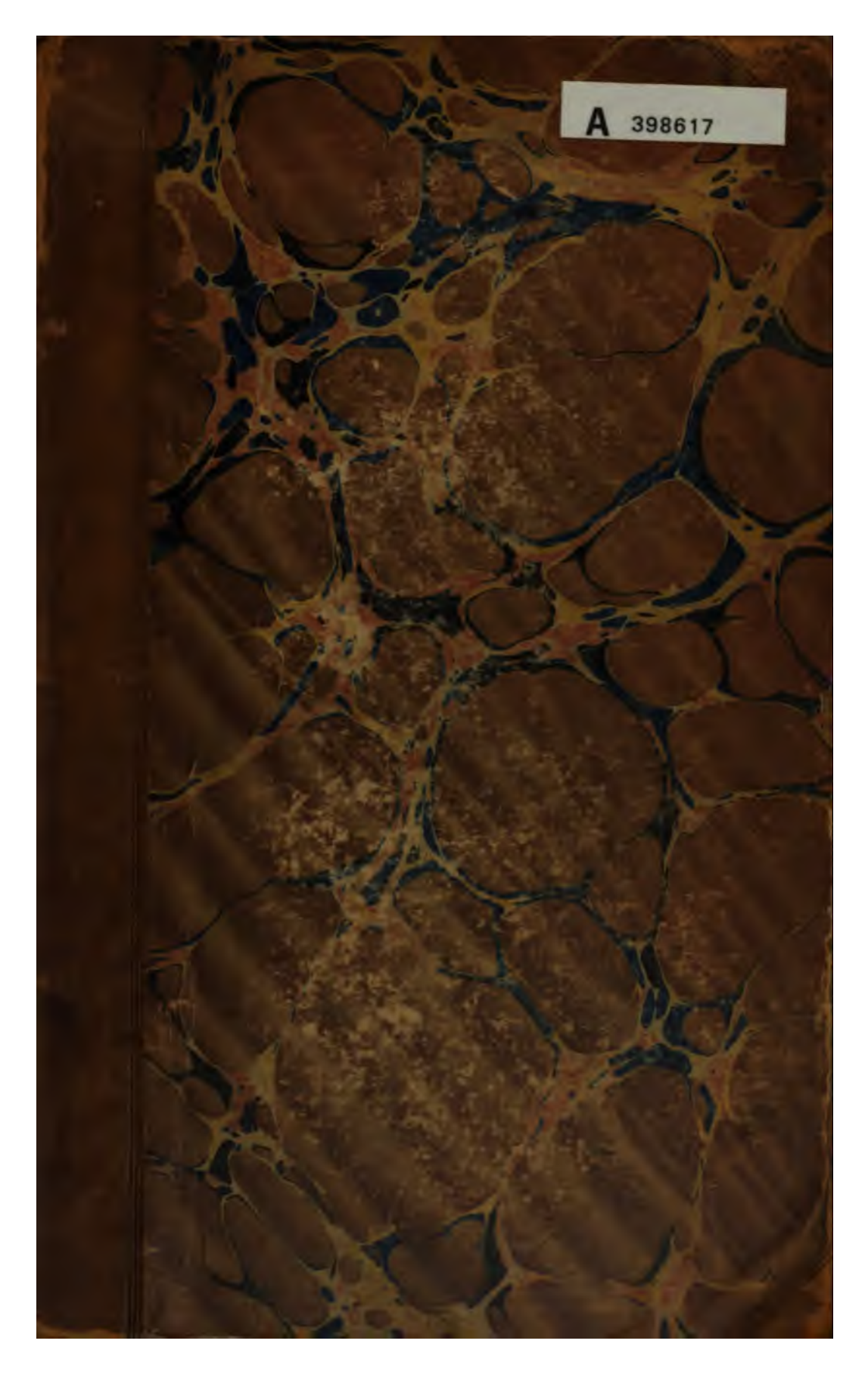
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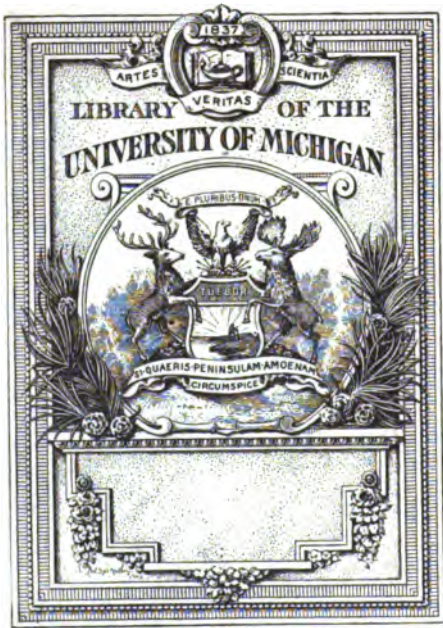
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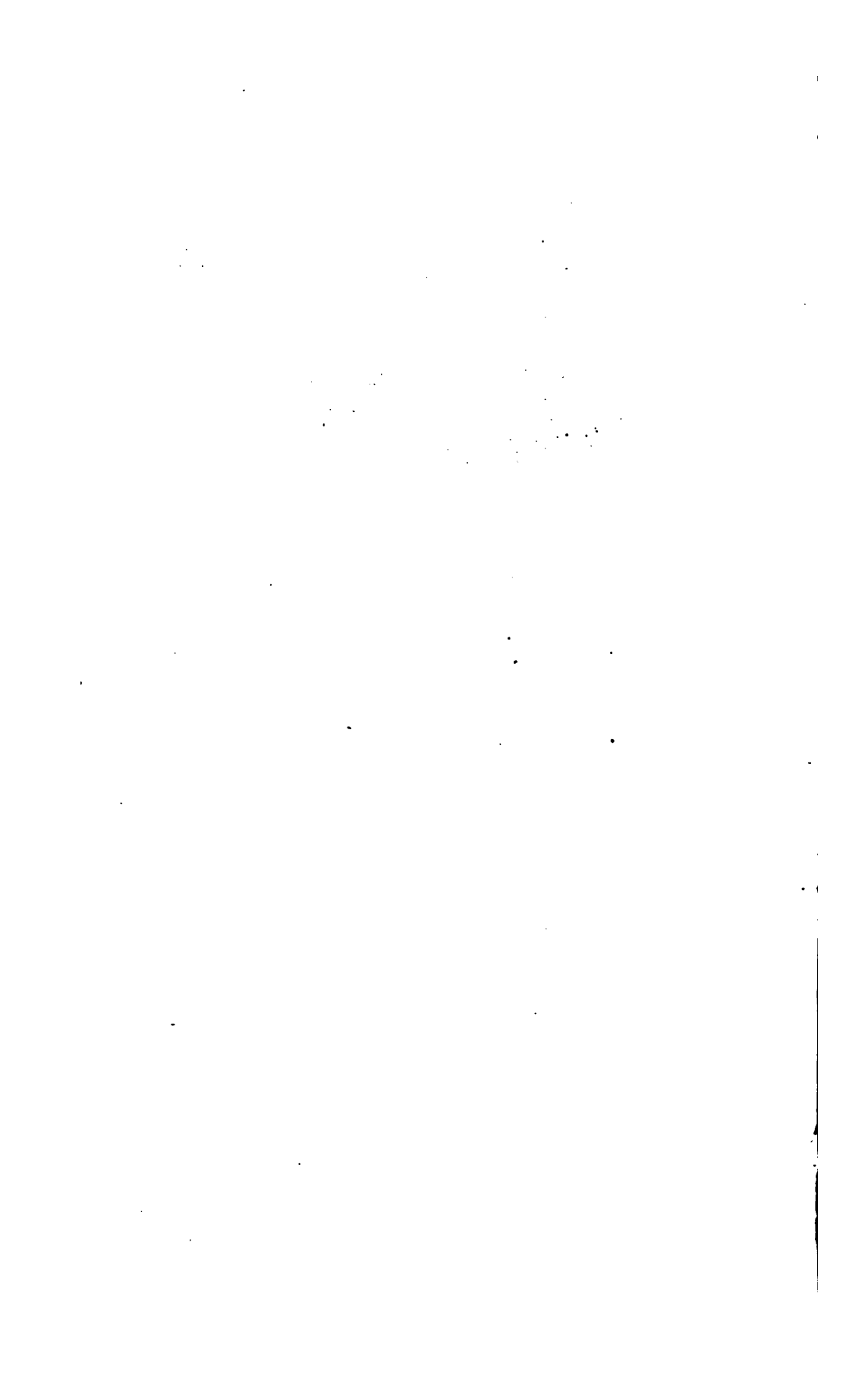
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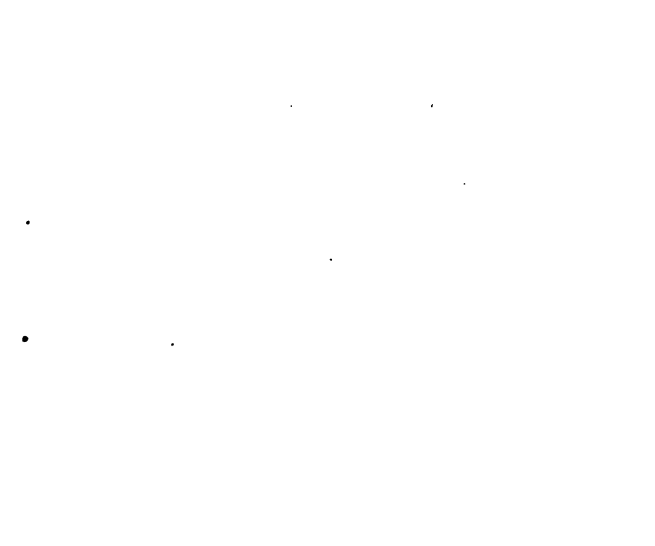
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The Marriage

THE COMMISSIONER:

OR,

De Lunatico Inquirendo.

James

WITH

TWENTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS ON STEEL

BY

Phiz.

DUBLIN

WILLIAM CURRY, JUN. AND COMPANY.

WILLIAM S. ORR AND COMPANY, LONDON.

FRASER AND CO. EDINBURGH.

1843.

DUBLIN
PRINTED BY J. F. KELLY, SON, AND PATTON,
5, Bachelor's-walk.

277 F 13 5.5.

TO

THAT ILLUSTRIOUS BODY,

THE FAULTS, FOLLIES, AND VICES

OF

The British People,

THIS FAINT AND INADEQUATE ATTEMPT

TO PLACE IN

THE PROMINENT SITUATION WHICH THEY DESERVE,

A FEW OF THE PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

OF

THAT NUMEROUS AND REMARKABLE BAND,

IS DEDICATED,

WITH A MOST PROFOUND SENSE OF THEIR MERITS,

BY

THEIR MOST HUMBLE AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

J. De Lunatico,

K. P. M.

V. S. ST. L.

&c. &c. &c.



P R E F A C E.

SWEET PUBLIC!

In presenting you with the first part of the *Travels of the Chevalier de Lunatico*, which was intrusted to our care by that wonderful and distinguished diplomatist, in order to be properly prepared for the press, we feel it necessary to make some apology for not having, in every instance, with that true lunatic deference to public opinion, whether right or wrong, which is the characteristic of the present day, followed exactly every indication that we received of your views and wishes. The misfortune, however, was, that we could not at all discover which way public opinion tended, though we watched with the utmost anxiety and attention every intimation that might be given us by the daily and weekly papers. But we found that the public press was not only at variance in regard to this book amongst its own members—some declaring it flat, stale, and unprofitable, without fun, wit, taste, talent, or learning; whilst others pronounced it to be the acme of human wisdom, full of brilliancy, fancy, judgment, genius, and instruction—but also that its opinion at different times, varied from its opinion at others; the very same persons vituperating it virulently at one moment, and at another lauding it to the skies. Such being the case, it may be very well conceived that we were sadly at a loss how to proceed, believing, nay knowing—and now we speak seriously—that upon the weekly and daily press of England there is employed a greater amount of talent, learning, and judgment than probably any other country has ever brought to bear upon any great operation. Left without guide, then, we have done what we fear we might have done if we had had a whole regiment of guides, like the French army in Algeria—namely, followed our own course, feeling

somewhat sure that, sooner or later, in one part or another, that course will please the reader also, whenever it does not shock or irritate his own particular follies, vices, vanities, and prejudices.

Receive our book, therefore, reader, with kindness; but first—if we may be permitted a figure—wash your eyes well with cold water before you read it, and rub your spectacles with a piece of chamois leather or a silk handkerchief; for as the medium is, so will be the colours that you see. If you do this, we have very little to fear, and leave the rest to your own good judgment. “*Ego me tuæ commendo et committo fidei.*”

On one point, however, we must pause for a single moment; we have received letters innumerable, anonymous and ominous, charging us with having attempted to bring great personages into contempt, and to satirize individuals. Now, once for all, we deny the imputation, and assert most distinctly, as we have before asserted, that we have not attempted to paint or depict any single individual person now living. The vices, the faults, and the madneses of many may here be a little scarified, it is true, and many a man may be perfectly conscious of having several of the weaknesses and follies portrayed in some of our personages; but he must not for a moment suppose that we had him in our eye, when we took the pencil in hand. The Commissioner's foolscap may, and doubtless will, fit a great many people in this good world of ours; but he begs leave to say that as his is a ready-made shop, the parties must try them on themselves, for he can assure them they were not made for them. In short, as the beautiful Aurora Borealis is probably nothing but a ray of galvanic light projected into space, so, dear reader, we wish this to be merely a ray of mental light, sent forth into the void of the world, to enable a few of our fellow-creatures to see how horrible and deformed are some of the creatures they have made pets of in the dark; and with this distinct assurance, we shall now say, *Vale.*

St. Luke's, 1st November, 1842.

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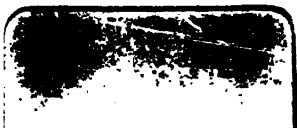
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THE COMMISSIONER ;

OR,

DE LUNATICO INQUIRENDO.

INTRODUCTION

THE CHEVALIER DE LUNATICO SPEAKS OF THINGS IN HIS OWN SPHERE—GIVES A GLANCE OF THE POLITICAL CONSTITUTION OF THE MOON—THE OPINION OF SEVERAL STATESMEN OF THINGS IN GENERAL—THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE LUNAR COMMISSION—THE AMBASSADOR IS INVESTED WITH EXTRAORDINARY POWERS—SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS JOURNEY.

WHEREAS *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, will doubtless expect, that I should address myself to the inhabitants of both the spheres with which I have had to do ; I must, contrary to the usual custom of authors, and especially in opposition to the rule laid down by the great poet Horace, begin my story at the beginning.

On the twenty-seventh day of the week, then, in the sixteen million-eth year of the moon's revolution round the earth, a great parliament, or assembly of representatives, was held in the capital city of St. Luke ; where a speaker being chosen, on account of his being dumb, the house occupied itself for some hours in discussing whether they should say what they meant, or what they did not mean ; when it was decided that, according to the constitutional practice of the moon, every man ought to say exactly what he did not mean, but what somebody else did.

The house then passed to the order of the day, and the report of the committee appointed to inquire whether any of the subjects of the moon had enlisted in the service of other states, and to prepare a foreign enlistment bill accordingly, having been brought up, Mr. Bully O'Cucumber, one of the members for the great volcano, rose and said, that the treatment which the volcano had received at the hands of the rest of the planet, was such as had never been endured, and never would be endured, to the end of time. He was going on to declare that the monstrous and horrible atrocities committed by the

bloody and ferocious tyrants on the other side of the house, would never be able to smother the fire of the volcano, or keep down the periodical irruptions to which it was subject: but he was interrupted by loud cries of "order, order—question, question." And after foaming at the mouth for some time, and gesticulating with infinite vehemence towards various parts of the house, he concluded by saying, that as honourable gentlemen were unwilling to hear truth—indeed they always were unwilling to hear the truth: truth was to them a drop of poison, which turned all their cup of joy to bitterness—but as they were unwilling to hear truth and him, he would only add, that they had better beware how they attempted to smother the fire of the volcano; for if he saw any effort of the kind, he was ready to cast himself into the midst of it; and who could doubt that the result would be the blowing up of the whole orb? He spoke expressly for the benefit of the honourable gentleman who was likely soon to come into power; for his propensity to keeping down flames of all kinds was too well known, to leave a doubt that one of his first efforts would be—if he might use such a figure—to cork the great volcano itself.

Sir Richard Power then rose, and said, that he would not attempt to follow the honourable member through the whole of his long and irrelevant speech; but he must say a few words, as that honourable gentleman had taken upon him to presume that he, Sir Richard, was likely soon to be called to power. Now, neither he, nor any one else, had any right to pre-suppose such a thing so confidently. He would, therefore, in no degree say what might be his measures towards the great volcano, should he ever be called into power. He would, however, tell the honourable gentleman, in general terms, what he thought of the district for which he was one of the representatives. He believed it to be one of the fairest and most beautiful portions of the globe we inhabit, rich in all the gifts of nature, and filled with a population, bright, generous, and kind, who had been placed by a concatenation of adverse and peculiar circumstances, in opposition to those who were really most friendly to them, and in the power of licentious demagogues, who were generally animated by one of two dangerous spirits—the violent spirit of factious party, or the more cunning spirit of personal ambition and self-interest. In regard to the fire of the volcano, he must set the honourable gentleman right respecting his opinion. He did not regard it as the great evil which the honourable gentleman supposed. He looked upon it as one of the vivifying principles which gave to the district additional fertility, warmth, richness, and beauty; and far from wishing to see it stopped, or even to do away with its occasional irruptions, the utmost he should ever desire would be, so to guard every fine edifice, and every great establishment; so to protect the city, the field, the mansion, and the cottage, that the flame might injure no one, but pass away peacefully, after diffusing warmth and brightness around. Having said thus much, he would recall the house to the question before it, namely, the report of the committee, and their recommendation that a commissioner should be sent to the nether sphere, for the purpose of inquiring whether the numerous spirits

proved to have abandoned their native country had taken refuge on the earth below.

A long and somewhat desultory discussion ensued: some members declaring that the appointment of a commissioner was premature; and others observing that they did not see why he should be sent down to the earth rather than to any other planet whatsoever. Some thought it would be better to begin by Saturn, or the Georgium Sidus, as the ultimate star of the whole system, and drive the stray spirits back from planet to planet, till they reached the moon. Others judged differently again, and proposed that the commission should begin its inquiries as near the sun as possible. Another honourable member, who was known to have a numerous family, and a great number of poor relations, believed it would be expedient to have a number of separate commissions, one to each star; and he demonstrated beyond all doubt or contradiction, that the more a government spent, the more economical it really was; that national prosperity was proved by bankruptcy, and that the diminution of the revenue was the best possible means of increasing the finances.

In the end, however, one of the committees rose to defend the report, and showed that therein, it had been proved by returns from the earth itself, that, a greater number of persons, whose whole conduct and demeanour showed them to be born subjects of the moon, had appeared on the surface of the inferior planet, since the year 1830, (as it is termed upon the earth) than at any preceding period, except during the years 1790-1-2-3-4-5, &c.; and, he therefore agreed that, as this fact was ascertained, it was but just and expedient to send a commissioner thither with full powers to claim, and send back all deserters from the lunar sphere; and he ended, by assuring some of the honourable gentlemen, that two and two never would make more than four, notwithstanding all that political economists might say. His speech ended the debate, the question was then put and carried without a division, and an humble address was voted and presented to his imperial majesty, whom the people of Europe prophanelly call, "The man in the Moon," beseeching him to send down a commissioner as aforesaid.

It was his majesty's pleasure, upon the recommendation of his secretary of state for strange affairs, to nominate so unworthy a person as myself, John de Lunatico, and to address to me a commission, dated on the third day of the sixteenth millioneth year, empowering me to inquire what subjects of the moon, truly so speaking, are resident upon the earth, without special leave and permission of his Lunatic Majesty; and to deliver summonses or subpoenas in the form of *small billets*, signed with my name and sealed with my seal, to such persons, as upon due investigation, I might judge to be astray, either from the capital city of St. Luke, or any other part of his majesty's dominions. The minister, at the same time that he delivered to me this commission, informed me that he would have full powers prepared for me by the seventh day of the same week, and at the same time strongly advised me to keep a public and a private journal;

the public journal to be delivered immediately after my return into the hand of the ministry, and never to be seen by any other eye but their own; the private journal to be printed as soon as possible for general circulation.

With these injunctions I promised to comply most devoutly, and retiring to my own house, I proceeded to make every preparation for my journey; affecting, as is usual on such occasions, to find it the most inconvenient thing in the world to go, while, in reality and truth, nothing could give me greater pleasure than to make such a trip at the public expense. I packed up accordingly those clothes and articles of various kinds that were absolutely necessary, in a small portmanteau covered with moon-calf-skin, and then having asked one of the ex-ministers to help me to find a mare's nest, I took some of the eggs as provision by the way. Some small business, which I had to transact with the treasury, detained me a considerable time, for on my first visit, the secretary told me that it was impossible to extract a single farthing from any chest in the place. On my second visit, however, the prime minister being busy with a lady, and the secretary eating his luncheon, one of the clerks gave me a key, and told me to help myself. This being done I had only to wait for my credentials.

On the eleventh day of the week, and year, whereof I have just spoken, I received the full powers which had been promised me, and I have since seen, during my travels upon the earth, how very useful it would be if the ambassadors of sublunar courts could be endued with the same, instead of the empty and unmeaning pieces of paper and parchment which they carry with them on their diplomatic missions. My powers were comprised in a pill box, a pot of ointment, and a phial; and I was directed immediately when I descended upon the earth to rub my eyes with the ointment, which would enable me, at once, to see into things in a much more profound manner than any of those around me, perceiving the real feelings and thoughts of all the men with whom I might be brought in contact, and making them declare unto me their true sentiments and ideas without the slightest reserve. The contents of the phial were left to my discretion either to drink or not as I liked, but I was informed that by taking a small portion thereof I should be able to enter into, and sympathise with, the sensations of any of my mortal companions that seemed to me worthy of such condescension on my part; and it was insinuated, though I was not directly commanded to do so, that it would be well for me, occasionally, to have recourse to the contents of the bottle, in order that I might more clearly comprehend the motives as well as the actions of mankind in general.

The pill box contained three hundred and ninety-seven pills of different sizes—some no bigger than the head of a pin, some as large as a tolerably sized marble. These represented the three hundred and ninety-seven languages of the earth, their sizes betokening the riches or poverty of the tongue. Thus, German was a tremendous bolus; English, a very good sized pill; Italian, somewhat less, but remarkably smooth and round; French, a small pea, somewhat gritty,

but rolling about with great celerity; Russian, of a somewhat larger size, but of a very irregular form, while there were a multitude of lesser ones, such as the languages of the Sandwich Islands, New Zealand, Otaheite, &c.; and nine or ten of the size of a minikin pin's head, upon each of which, by the aid of a microscope, might be discovered the word, Australia. By taking any one of these pills, I swallowed a complete language with almost as much facility as a certain reverend gentleman in the little green island, called Ireland.

I was enjoined to set off with all speed, and, as I find is usual in such cases, although the government had delayed so many days in sending me my credentials, they did not allow me a single day to take leave of my friends. I accordingly put myself, at once, on board a steam-boat, crossed the great sea towards the side of the planet which is turned to the earth, and then, for the second time in my life, beheld, what is certainly the most magnificent sight which my eyes ever yet lighted upon—the earth rolling through space in all its glory, and, apparently, about forty times as large as the sun, but shining with that calm, soft, mellow light, which has met celebration well deserved from all the sentimental poets of St. Luke. I myself have written poetry upon the subject, which I may give the reader in an appendix. However, it is not at all astonishing that the people on the other side of the moon are so fond of making a trip round to see this magnificent sight.

Having arrived at the small village and port to which the steam-boat plied, an immediate demand was made for my passport, an instrument, which I am proud to say, was first invented in the moon; and having exhibited my papers, I went to the railway office, and required a special train to carry me down to the earth. This, however was somewhat rudely refused me; and, indignant at such conduct, I determined to proceed by the old-fashioned way, which we well know was employed upon a former occasion by his imperial majesty himself, and which there is reason to believe, is as speedy as any steam-carriage in either sphere, seeing it is recorded that he came down *too soon* to find his way to Norwich.

Accordingly, I set myself upon a fine, smooth, oblique moonbeam, drew my knees up to my chin, gathered my coat tails under my arms, placed my little portmanteau behind me, put my hands over my knees, and requesting a tobacconist, who happened to be passing by, to give me a gentle push, I began sliding downwards with a pleasant, easy motion, the thin moonbeam swaying up and down beneath me like an Indian's bridge of grass in the Pampas of Peru. The journey was as a pleasant one as ever was made, and tolerably rapid also: the only thing at all annoying in my course, being the fact of the tobacconist aforesaid disturbing some of the loose pebbles, in his exertion to push me off, which came rattling down after me, and reached the earth before I was half way thither. I saw one of these small stones afterwards in the cabinet of a naturalist, and the fool called it an aerolite. In about two hours I was within a thousand miles of the earth, which, by this time, had lost its luminous appearance, and seemed nothing but a great, black, dull mass lying underneath me.

The aspect of the place appeared somewhat cold and strange; but just at that moment, a number of merry voices singing, cheered me on the way, and I found it was a large party of Frenchmen's wits just going up to the moon, having been lost by their right owners during some great political disturbance. They passed close by me, and I heard them sing the following song to a merry tune as they went:—

SONG.

FIRST VOICE

The moon, the moon, the jolly round moon;
 Let us all up to her bright face soon!
 There's nothing on earth that should keep us below;
 The folks are all flat, and the coaches all slow,
 Their wine is all sour, and their pipe out of tune;
 So up to the moon, the jolly round moon!
 The moon, the moon, the jolly round moon!

SECOND VOICE.

There is nothing on earth that is sure for an hour;
 Look at that little minister climbing to power,
 The patriot now, the parasite then,
 He'll get up on high, and he'll fall back again:
 He'll argue on one side from morning till noon,
 And next day he'll send his last speech to the moon;
 The moon, the moon, the jolly round moon.

THIRD VOICE.

Humbug's the trade that prospers all through,
 From the crown bearing king, to the bag bearing Jew;
 The lawyer, the statesman, the doctor, the dame,
 The priest and the pagan, all humbugs the same;
 And but as much truth, as would lie in a spoon
 Would blow the whole universe up to the moon;
 The moon, the moon, the jolly round moon.

FOURTH VOICE.

I saw a young widow as cold as the ice,
 I saw a great patriot refusing his price,
 I saw a great lawyer decline a bad cause,
 I saw a great orator hating applause;
 But all found out motives for changing full soon,
 And their good resolutions went up to the moon;
 The moon, the moon, the jolly round moon.

FIFTH VOICE.

The way's somewhat long, and the coach somewhat odd,
 We shall need some provisions to keep out the cold,
 So what have you got, Jean, to use by the way,
 For you keep the bag and the piper must pay?
 We must make ourselves merry, for mirth is a boon
 Less fitted for earth than the jolly round moon;
 The moon, the moon, the jolly round moon.

SIXTH VOICE.

Here's a farthing a miser once gave to the poor,
 The tears of an heir, and the smile of ———,*
 A physician's prescription, a dear friend's advice,
 The virtue of countesses not over nice,
 The love of a poet, and tail of baboon,
 Here's provision enough to go up to the moon;
 The moon, the moon, the jolly round moon.

In ten minutes more I entered a thick cloud, as it seemed to me, so great was the oppression upon my chest by the increasing density of the atmosphere; but, still, every thing was clear around the eye, and I speedily began to see below me green fields and valleys, and streams and lakes, together with villages and churches, and country houses and towns, all very like the moon indeed. "This is a delightful country," I said to myself; "equal to the brightest parts of our own planet. I am sure I shall be pleased with the people, and will endeavour to enter into their characters."

I made a resolution, then, to take a few drops from my phial whenever I was introduced into a society where the faces were pleasing to me, so that I might sympathise with my companions, even if it were but for an hour. This was a rash resolution, of which I had soon cause to repent, as the reader will see hereafter; but to pursue my history, the thickness of the atmosphere speedily lost its oppressive effect, but it answered a very good purpose by gradually diminishing the rapidity of my progress, which, had it gone on might have brought me into very unpleasant collision with the earth. As it was, sliding gently down with a decreasing velocity, I was guided by the moonbeam into a pleasant old-fashioned garden, as I heard it afterwards termed, of a very peculiar aspect, which, as I at once perceived, from the accounts that I had read in the many millions of books of lunatic travels, that I have perused, denoted that I was in no other country but that called England.

It is true that this garden was not of the taste of the present day; but there were those marks about it which left no doubt as to the

* This word is so blotted out in the original, that it was found impossible to decipher it. Some think that the line should have ended with "Jane Shore," or something of that kind.

locality. There were numerous beds of flowers within trim, neatly cut borders of box, while round about, filling up all the vacancies between these beds, was a smooth green turf. The garden was surrounded by thick hedges of yew, some eight feet high, and over the whole, the calm tranquil light of our own beautiful planet was streaming, illuminating every corner thereof, so that one could see the most minute stone in a smooth gravel-walk that ran between the flower-garden and a little bowling-green. This latter spot was covered with the same velvet-like turf, and sunk somewhat lower than the rest of the ground with inclined edges sloping gently off, and giving the whole the appearance of a green soup-plate. I came down without any noise, though the heels of my boots made a slight indentation in the turf as I lighted, but without producing any unpleasant sensation in my own frame. I felt myself very comfortable, my spirits high, my prospects bright, and the inquiry upon which I was about to enter, one of the most interesting that it is possible to conceive. The manifold curious results of that inquiry, the reader will soon know ; but as, in its course, I had an opportunity of bestowing inestimable benefits upon my own country, and performing acts, which must leave my name immortal, as my genius, and wisdom, and discrimination, and judgment, my courage, my skill, my wit, and my talents, were all displayed in such a manner as to astound and surprise any one who is capable of those passions, a due and becoming modesty induces me, notwithstanding the solicitation of my friends, and the urgent request of the government, to put my notes into the hands of a clever young acquaintance, and beg him to give an account of my travels to the world in his own words ; thus, avoiding egotism, and sparing a terrible consumption of capital I's.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHEVALIER'S FIRST ACQUAINTANCE—FINDS HIM TO BE A DOUBTFUL CHARACTER—
TWO LOVERS INTRODUCED TO THE CHEVALIER—A NEW SORT OF PICKPOCKET—
SCHEMES OF LIFE—AN OLD GENTLEMAN'S VIEW OF A YOUNG LADY'S HAPPINESS.

THE travels of the Chevalier de Lunatico may be said to take their point of departure from the little bowling-green, at the edge of which he first lighted in his descent. It is greatly to be regretted indeed that he has not thought fit to give us farther information concerning the moon, its political state, civil, religious, and military history, natural productions, and philosophical progress, as the things that can be of not the slightest benefit to us are of course always the most interesting. His silence in these respects however, leaves us no choice, and we must even take up the history of his journey where he himself left it, and begin from the pleasant little garden into which he had found his way.

To say the truth he was a little agitated, or fluttered, at his new position, but he recovered himself in a moment, and looking round him, the first object his eyes rested on was an old gentleman with a thoughtful air, walking up and down in the bowling-green before-mentioned, enjoying the moonlight. The chevalier was naturally attracted to a person of such tastes, and followed him as he turned towards the other side of the green, not having perceived the descent of a stranger into his garden. Mr. de Lunatico thought fit, however, in the first instance, to place his portmanteau under a shrub, and swallow a pill out of his box, which instantly made him thoroughly acquainted with the English language; nor did he forget his eye-salve, but took care to be well prepared before he made a single step in the new world before him. The old gentleman turned at the other side of the bowling-green, and the chevalier advancing, made an excuse for intruding upon his privacy. The powers, however, with which he was endowed, had their effect upon the stranger at once, and taking the chevalier's hand, he shook it heartily, saying, with a benevolent air, that he was delighted to see him whatever was the cause of his coming. "I am taking," he said, "my usual solitary walk by moonlight, giving up my thoughts to philosophical inquiries for half an hour before I go to supper, and if you will do me the favour of accompanying me while I continue my perambulations, we will afterwards go in, and I will introduce you to my daughter, and a young cousin of ours who is just now staying at my house; you will find them very pleasant people."

"I doubt it not in the least," replied the chevalier, in a civil tone. "You seem very fond of the moonlight, sir."

"Very," said he.

"Pray, were you ever in the moon, sir?" demanded Mr. de Lunatico.

"Often," replied his companion.

That is candid at least, thought the chevalier to himself, putting his hand into his pocket, and seeking for one of his little billets for the moon, with the full intention of sending his new friend back immediately; but the moment after, the old gentleman added, "Of course we both speak figuratively. I have often visited the moon with my telescope, and think that I have made some discoveries. However, I am not vain of them nor too sure of them; for in this wonderful age so much is every day added to our stock of knowledge, that we hourly learn how little we do know, how little we can ever know, and how imperfectly we know that which we are permitted to know."

The chevalier buttoned up his breeches pocket in which he kept the billets, saying to himself, "This will never do! No signs of a stray spirit here!" But just at that moment the old gentleman laid his hand upon his visitor's shoulder, saying with a good-humoured cheerful smile—"But my moralizing makes you serious. What a beautiful night it is: come, let us have a game of bowls, there are the balls in the corner—you understand the game?—Well, then, I'll show you—take off your coat, take off your coat—now you see, hold your ball in this manner, balancing him right in the middle of your hand in this way."—And after a few words more of instruction, the chevalier and his old companion were in the middle of a game of bowls, Mr. de Lunatico, somewhat clumsy at the unaccustomed trade, and his instructor laughing till his eyes ran down with tears at every hit he made and the chevalier lost.

The latter unbuttoned his pocket again, slipped his hand into it, drew out a billet between his finger and thumb, and concealed it in the palm of his hand, only waiting till the game was done to present it in due form. When it was over, however, the old gentleman wiped his brow, put on his coat, and with his kind and instructive air, said—"I dare say this seems to you all very foolish, that a man of my years, studies, and experience, with higher subjects on which to employ his mind, and with some habits of reflection, should spend any portion of his time in the sports of a boy. But I hold it to be wise so to regulate our enjoyments that we lose none, and as our youthful pleasures are certainly sweeter than any other, to bring them back from time to time to refresh us in our old age, as a man who has long been accustomed to drink wine, finds when thirsty ten times more relief in a glass of plain cold water."

Once more replacing his billet, the chevalier resolved not to be so hasty in his conclusions for the future, and was inclined to put it to himself as a sort of problem for future solution, whether there is most reason in folly, or folly in reason.

"Now, let us go in," said the old gentleman, in continuation; "but in the first place favour me with your name, that I may introduce you properly, though, as the great poet has justly observed, 'What's in a



1784

The Chevalier's first game at bowls

1900

name?" Nevertheless, it is convenient as a mode of classification; for every one must be somehow designated to our minds, and were I never to learn what you are called amongst your own friends, I should have to put you down in the book of memory as *the man with the long nose.*"

Having a sort of natural jealousy in regard to any one meddling with that peculiar feature of his face on which the old gentleman had touched, the chevalier hastened to stop him from making any farther allusions to his proboscis, by informing him that the visitor was called by his friends and countrymen, the Chevalier de Lunatico, that he was a stranger in the country, and was in fact upon a voyage of discovery. This intelligence seemed to be very satisfactory to the old gentleman, and he was proceeding to make various inquiries into the peculiar nature of the objects the chevalier proposed to himself, which might not have been very convenient to answer, when a sudden gust of cold air interrupted their conversation by reminding the host that it was time to return into the house. Leading the way, therefore, with the most perfect politeness, he conducted the chevalier to a small ivy-covered porch, by which they entered into the dwelling. The passage was crowded with all manner of things, as various in their nature as those deposited in the great museum of the capital. There were telescopes beyond number, of all shapes and sizes, which the old philosopher called his guns for shooting at the stars. There were electrical machines with which he declared that, but give him a wire long enough, and he would knock down an ox on the other side of the world. There were screws, and levers, and quadrants, and sextants, and artificial horizons; there were air-pumps so perfect, that a guinea and a feather, instead of falling with equal velocity, would not fall at all; and galvanic batteries and piles, by means of which he assured the chevalier that he could produce spontaneous lice. Mr. de Lunatico told him in reply to this last boast, that he thought he had better let it alone, as those things multiply fast enough without assistance; at least it is well known that such is the case in the moon, especially in the heads of philosophers.

It was with some difficulty that the two threaded this encumbered maze, and at length reached a mahogany door, which being suddenly opened by the host, displayed the interior of a comfortable chamber, and a little domestic scene very pleasant to the eyes of the chevalier. The room was low and wainscotted with dark wood, but it was well and cheerfully lighted, for the philosopher was very much at his ease in the world. A thick carpet, from a country called Turkey, covered the floor, several tables occupied different places in the room, and the corners were adorned with neat antique shelves, on which were piled up numerous pieces of ancient porcelain, extraordinary shells, and other curiosities, while a large piano-forte occupied a conspicuous place, loaded on the top with a guitar, a flute, and a number of books of music.

On the hearth crackled a bright wood fire, and on a wide-spreading sofa, with downy pillows and a chintz cover, sat side by side, and somewhat near each other, a very pretty rosy-lipped, dark-eyed girl of eighteen or nineteen, and a young gentleman of as prepossessing an

appearance as could be beheld; tall, well formed, graceful, with a sort of frank and sparkling gaiety of expression in his countenance which won upon the beholder at first sight. The young gentleman rose as the master of the house and his guest entered, drawing a little farther from the fair lady in the first place, while the colour mounted slightly into her cheek. Thus, while the old philosopher introduced the chevalier to his daughter, Laura and their cousin, Harry Worrel, Mr. de Lunatico could not help seeing in prospect matrimony and wedding rings, and a long line of grandchildren frisking round the knees of his worthy host. He, on his part, seemed perfectly contented with his daughter and his cousin, and the whole world; and in the expansive satisfaction of his own heart, he passed a high eulogium upon his new guest; speaking of him as a distinguished philosopher upon a voyage of discovery for the benefit of his native country.

It is impossible to describe the kindness and civility with which the two young people received the Chevalier de Lunatico; and the clear-sightedness which he possessed, by virtue of his lunar ointment, showed him all their feelings, and made them open their whole hearts to him whenever they had an opportunity of conversing with him apart. He found, as he was led to suppose from the very first sight, that they were desperately in love with each other; but it proved that they were not a little afraid the young lady's father should discover their passion, as they both agreed—it seemed to the chevalier very unreasonably—that he would certainly oppose their marriage.

They took the opportunity of informing their new acquaintance of all this, while the old gentleman was out of the room for a moment; but Mr. de Lunatico laughed at their fears, saying it was quite evident that her father perceived their love, and destined them for each other. He could induce neither of them to believe him in this respect, and at length to quiet their apprehensions; he told them he would speak with Mr. Longmore on the subject, for so was the philosopher called.

“He will discover to me his whole feelings,” said the chevalier, trusting to his extraordinary powers. “He will discover to me his whole feelings without the slightest reserve, and you shall hear the result.”

Thereupon they both besought him most earnestly on the contrary not to say a word to that gentleman. “If he were to discover it,” they said, “he would separate us from each other immediately, and never suffer us to meet any more. This is always the case with fathers in our country: they lead their children to fall in love, and then are angry. As it is, we are very happy, and dread losing the blessing we possess.”

The chevalier reassured them, by saying that he would not in any degree betray them, but would only induce Mr. Longmore to open his mind with regard to his daughter, and to the views he entertained for her future fate.

“But, do you think he will tell you?” demanded the young lady; “he is very secret and reserved upon every subject since the other man stole a star from him.”

Mr. de Lunatico was proceeding to inquire what this extraordi-

nary charge could mean, when the philosopher's step, which was somewhat creaky, was heard coming along the passage, and his daughter replied, "Ask him, ask him, he will tell you all about it." "Dear papa," she continued eagerly, as her father entered, "do tell the chevalier how that abominable man stole the star from you!"

"Ah! that was a scandalous act," cried the old gentleman, setting down a bottle of very particular old wine, which he had gone to the cellar to fetch himself, in order to do honour to the chevalier's arrival. "It's a fact, upon my honour, sir, he stole my star from me, my very best star, just in the middle of Orion's belly. He was a Frenchman, sir, the natural born enemy of all Englishmen, and I ought to have known better than to trust him; but, with the foolish good humour of our nation, I wished to show him every sort of civility, and took him into my observatory, where I had just been writing down, for transmission to the Royal Society, the account of my having discovered a new star in the belly of Orion just a quarter of a degree below his belt. It was the most beautiful star that ever was seen, sir, not bigger than the point of the finest needle, even when viewed through my new thirty-foot telescope, which I invented for the express purpose of magnifying the fixed stars. Sir, it was a delightful star. It would have handed my name down to posterity with a brightness that would have eclipsed that of Newton himself. Yes, sir, yes, it would have made my name immortal; for it having pleased Providence only to give me a daughter, I intended in some sort to adopt it as a son, and call it Jerry Longmore—why should it not bear my name as well as the Georgium Sidus that of Herschel? But that French villain, sir, while I was called away for a moment to diminish the intensity of the galvanic currents which were threatening to set the house on fire, cribbed, pocketed, filched my notes from the table, made an excuse to get off as fast as possible, travelled post night and day till he arrived in Paris, and it being cloudy weather, before I could repeat my observations, find out my star again, and send my notes to London, he had published the whole account, declared he discovered it himself, and called it by his own villainous name of Tirlupin, by which it will be known to all posterity—*Tirlupin ou le nombril d'Irion!* Such is the beastly name by which it now goes in the French catalogues."*

The chevalier condoled with the old gentleman upon the loss he had sustained, and inquired whether there were not some court in Europe to which such offences could be referred.

"Posterity, sir, posterity!" said Mr. Longmore; "posterity is the only court to which we can appeal; but alack and a-well-a-day, we cannot wait for its decisions. Slow justice, chevalier, slow justice in

* To guard against all mistakes here and hereafter, the editor of the Travels of the Chevalier de Lunatico begs to state, upon the authority of the chevalier himself, that not one word contained in this work has the slightest personal reference to any individual now living. Therefore, if there should be any gentleman of the name of Tirlupin in the world, he is assured that his cognomen has only been adopted to cover a generalization.

that court; but still it is some satisfaction to think that it will do right in the end, and that perhaps my star will be called Jerry Longmore after all."

The poor gentleman was so moved by his own injuries, and so touched by Mr. de Lunatico's condolence, that as soon as supper was set upon the table he began to ply the bottle heartily, and before an hour was over was decidedly in a condition to discover many more new stars. At length, however, finding things become somewhat confused before his sight, he caused the chevalier to be conducted to the chamber assigned to him; and his little portmanteau having been brought in, the lunar commissioner sat down to consider upon the whole, whether the good old philosopher had merited his billet or not. He resolved, however, not to be too rash, and retiring to bed fell sound asleep.

The first beams of the morning sun stealing through a little round hole which had been left in the window shutters, woke the chevalier on the following morning, and dressing himself as speedily as possible, he descended to the garden, where he found the good old gentleman as fresh and hearty as ever, propping up the stems of some sweet peas, and apparently enjoying his garden as much as he had done his bottle.

"I think," he said, after the first salutations were over, "I think I was a little tipsy last night. It was not my day either, so that it was all in honour of your arrival."

"Pray, Mr. Longmore," demanded the chevalier, "have you then a particular day for getting drunk?"

"No, sir, no," replied the philosopher, "not exactly drunk, that is a harsh word—Fuddled, sir, a leetle fuddled, perhaps—tipsee-ish, nothing more. Many ancient philosophers and physicians have recommended us to deviate a little from sobriety from time to time, and as we should always be regular even in our irregularities, I make a point of going to bed comfortable, as I term it, every Thursday regularly. I have continued to do so to the great benefit of my health, mental and corporeal, for the last fifty years, and I see no reason why I should not do so for fifty years more."

"May I ask," said the chevalier drily, "how long people usually live in your country?"

"Why, about seventy years," replied the philosopher; "but I have passed that period, and in the constitution of the human body, the bones, the muscles, the fibres, the nerves, the blood vessels, the glands, the fluids, and membranes of which it is composed, I see no principle of inherent decay which should prevent the human machine, if properly sheltered, protected, and regulated, from going on for ever."

The chevalier put his hand in his pocket, but curiosity to hear something more of his companion's views, restrained him from delivering at once the billet to which he thought Mr. Longmore had now established an indubitable title. That gentleman went on, however, as is the way with men, to argue so reasonably in regard to his unreasonable expectations, that he soon staggered Mr. de Lunatico in his purpose. He contended that what had been, might be; he cited a whole host of old

gentlemen, called Methuselah, Lamech, Cainan, Mahalaleel, old Jenkins, and old Parr, who had lived a great deal longer than he had proposed to himself; and he contended that it was entirely man's own fault, either by diet, passion, folly, or fear, that made him die at all before he liked it. "Man, sir, man," he said, "is not a candle, which being lighted at the top, burns down to the bottom, and then goes out with a stink in the socket. On the contrary, there is not one cause to be discovered in the construction of our external frame, nor one motive in all that we know of the soul, nor any reason in the combination of the two for supposing that I, who now stand here before you, may not be just as much alive and comfortable a hundred years hence, about which period of life Methuselah begat Lamech, as I am at this moment. But, there I see through the open window, Laura has come down to make breakfast, and we must soon go in and join her."

"As soon as ever you please, sir," replied the chevalier; "for she seems to me a very charming creature."

"She is a very good specimen of the particular class of animal to which she belongs," replied Mr. Longmore. "The most perfect of the mammalia. I am somewhat proud of my daughter, sir; for besides being able to comprehend and appreciate the wonderful discoveries in science which have been made by your humble servant, she has also a tender and affectionate heart, and what between my instructions, and the marriage which she is likely soon to enter into, there can be no doubt of her being perfectly happy."

"I am glad to hear you intend to marry her early," replied the chevalier briefly, wishing to let him develop his own purposes, which Mr. de Lunatico knew he would do in consequence of the powers that had been given him by the Minister for Strange Affairs.

"Oh, that I shall do, certainly," answered Mr. Longmore. "Every woman, sir, has a right to be married. It is a necessity of their nature. Taking a husband is to them, in the summer-day of life, no more than taking a breakfast. They have an appetite for matrimony, and those who do not marry may be said to starve. One of our poets has declared that man was not made to live alone. I am not quite sure that he is right, but right he would have been if he had spoken of woman. They always want something to lean upon; they are climbing plants, my dear chevalier, and I intend ere three weeks be over to put a husband down by the side of my daughter, just as I have stuck in a stick by the side of those sweet peas—a very apt simile. Ha, ha, ha! and the old gentleman laughed heartily, and with great apparent satisfaction.

"Pray, Mr. Longmore," said the chevalier, "if it be not an impertinent question, who is the happy man that is to act the part of pea-stick on this occasion? I think I can guess, but I should like much to hear it from your own lips."

The philosopher smiled complacently, and then replied to Mr. de Lunatico's horror and astonishment,—

"I don't think you can divine; for I rather believe you never saw him in your life. It is the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus

Fitzurse—which, being interpreted, means ‘son of a bear’—the only child of my near neighbour, Viscount Outrun.”

The chevalier’s heart felt for his two young friends; for to tell the reader the truth, he had contrived slyly to let fall a few drops of his sympathetic fluid into the first glass of wine he had drunk with them; and from that moment felt a degree of interest in all their affairs, which was quite marvellous. It struck him, however, that as soon as the good old philosopher discovered which way his daughter’s inclinations ran, he would immediately change his purposes. It was evident that her happiness was his grand object; he was a man of sense and discrimination too, and not likely to be led away by any vain imaginations, except philosophical ones; and Mr. de Lunatico, therefore, ventured to put a few more questions to him, in order to ascertain whether the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse possessed such high qualities, corporeal and intellectual, as could balance the great advantage of his young friend Worrel, in possessing the fair Laura’s heart.

“Pray, Mr. Longmore,” said he, “is this young man a very virtuous one or a very learned one, a distinguished soldier, an accomplished gentleman, a skilful statesman, or a great philosopher?”

His companion hesitated, and the chevalier could see that he was very unwilling to reply to his questions; but the powers of his eyesalve were not to be resisted; and being forced to tell all, Mr. Longmore replied,—

“To say the truth, chevalier, he is not very famous for his virtue; he seduced the miller’s daughter, and then threw her away like a worn garment, so that the poor girl drowned herself in the dam. Then he intrigued with the attorney’s wife, was prosecuted, and forced to pay damages by her husband, who, immediately after the trial was over, took her back to live with him, and gave her a smart new pelisse out of the money. No; I can’t say he is ve-ry virtuous. As to his learning, I believe he can read and write; but I don’t think much more—he is a peer’s son, you know. And then again, in respect to his being a distinguished soldier, he did distinguish himself at the last great battle, but it was by running away. He is what we call an accomplished gentleman, however, now-a-days; for he smokes an immense number of cigars; can spit farther through his teeth than his own groom; has cheated a veterinary surgeon in selling a horse; can drive a tandem to perfection; and ride, drink, swear, and frighten women and children, with any man in the United Kingdoms.”

“Then, pray, my dear sir,” demanded the chevalier, in as quiet a tone as he could possibly assume, “what is your motive for bestowing your daughter upon this unpleasant young gentleman?”

“She will be a peeress,” said the old man, in a low tone; “she will be a peeress!”

“But, suppose she would rather not,” said Mr. de Lunatico.

“She shall, by ——,” cried the philosopher, with a very unphilosophical oath. “Good Heaven! when I have been striving and labouring for her happiness, and am now ready to settle all that I have

on earth upon her, and to pay off the mortgage upon the Outrun estate, and to do every thing in the world for her! If the girl were mad enough to say a word against what I propose, I would cast her off for ever."

The old gentleman by this time had worked himself into such a passion, that the chevalier saw it would be useless to reason with him; for he had remarked in the moon and elsewhere, that there is nothing which makes people so angry, as to find that other people can be happy in a different way from that which they propose. Mr. de Lunatico once thought indeed of interrupting all the old gentleman's schemes, by giving him his summons to another sphere; but then the wish to see how things would go, and the positive prohibition which had been laid upon him in regard to using the powers with which he was invested, to influence the ordinary course of human affairs, induced him to pause; when just at that moment, Laura put her beautiful little head out of the window, and summoned them to the breakfast-room, where the chevalier found that poor young Worrel had taken his place, and was enjoying his dream of happiness, unconscious of the fate that was preparing for him.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHEVALIER FINDS HIMSELF IN AN AWKWARD BUT COMMON PREDICAMENT—INQUIRES CURIOUSLY INTO THE NATURE OF LOVE—AN INVITATION TO A BALL—THE REASONABLENESS OF DUELLING DEMONSTRATED—THE CHEVALIER AND THE LOVER TAKE AN AFTERNOON'S RIDE—WHO WE SHOULD MARRY AND WHO WE SHOULD NOT—THE PREVIOUS HISTORY OF ONE OF THE CHARACTERS—THE RENOWNED JOEY PIKE IS MADE ACQUAINTED WITH THE READER, AS WELL AS MRS. MUGGINS—SOME MORE OF THE WORREL CHRONICLES—THE CHEVALIER TAKES A MOONLIGHT RIDE, AND MEETS WITH A SOFT SOLICITOR ON THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

THE morning passed pleasantly, the clear freshness of an English breakfast, the bright looks of Laura and her lover, the brown toast, the new laid eggs, the fragrant coffee, to say nothing of some excellent broiled ham kept hot under a silver cover, and some golden honey in a crystal jar, all tended to reconcile the Chevalier de Lunatico to the planet in which he was destined to make a temporary sojourn, and make him comprehend the inducements which lead so many spirits astray from the kingdom of the moon. Although the house of the philosopher was a very comfortable residence, yet reflecting that business must be thought of before pleasure, and judging from their conversation of that morning that there could be very little doubt as to which world good Mr. Longmore belonged to, the chevalier, on second thoughts, proposed to give him his billet for the moon as soon after breakfast as possible, and to proceed on his way without further delay. Before the meal was over, however, the old gentleman was led into a discussion concerning the effects of virtue and vice on human happiness; and so shrewdly did he argue, so sensibly did he reason, so eloquently did he prove that "Health consists in temperance alone, and Peace, oh Virtue! Peace is all thine own," that the chevalier began again to doubt whether a man who was so wise in some respects must not be right in others also, and whether constituted as the earth is, it might not be really better to marry a daughter to a coward, a drunkard, a debauchee, and a fool, rather than to a sensible, affectionate, high-spirited young man, when the one had a title, and the other had none. Mr. de Lunatico was certainly at this period unacquainted with the common practices of our world, otherwise he would have had no doubt upon the matter. He resolved, however, to inquire farther, and after breakfast, Mr. Longmore pressed his hand kindly, saying, "You must not think of quitting us for a day or two, although I must leave you under the care of my daughter, and our young cousin, Worrel, for I must now go to my observatory to examine these terrible spots in the sun. I would invite you, chevalier, to give me your assistance, but after the sad loss I sustained, I took an oath that no foreigner should ever enter

the observatory again. In you, my dear sir, I have the most profound confidence, as you are well aware, but my oath must not be broken."

The chevalier put his mind at ease by begging him to make no excuses, as he could have given him no assistance in regard to the sun, having confined himself entirely to another sphere.

When Mr. Longmore had retired, the chevalier found himself in the very awkward position of a companion of two lovers. I never could discover why, the number three has always been looked upon as a lucky one by astrologers in olden times, and housemaids and peasant girls in our own. It is evidently also considered as something fine, in the constitutions of states, it is revered by magistrates, it is the gauge of the congregation, and wherever we turn we find number three making himself as busy and important as a new made member of parliament; and yet, after all, there are few situations more uncomfortable than being number three, when two is quite company enough. The chevalier, however, was, as the reader well knows, very peculiarly circumstanced, and, in fact, was not half so much in the way as any one else might have been. The confidence which he inspired, at the very first sight, had its effects upon the lovers as well as upon all others. Laura said in her own heart that she did not care at all about being made love to in his presence, and Harry Worrel vowed that it was a matter of moonshine to him whether the chevalier saw all their proceedings or not. Such being the case, the chevalier made himself comfortable, and entering, as he did, into all the feelings, thoughts, and wishes of the fair Laura and her lover, he began a somewhat interesting conversation with them concerning their future fate.

Let it not be supposed, however, that although he did sympathise with all their sensations, he was not without a great deal of surprise at the phenomenon of love, and set himself seriously to consider whether it was, or was not in itself a species of lunacy. "Here are two beings," he said to himself, "composed of bundles of fibres, disposed artfully around a jointed framework of earthenware, and covered over with a soft, sleek, pretty coloured tegument, ornamented with a glossy, curling, vegetable substance, called hair, and united with a peculiar sort of spirit, differing so little from our own spirits in the moon, and those of other planets, that it is difficult to distinguish the one from the other. These beings see each other, and because one happens to have a different shaped patch of red, or black, or blue from the rest of their fellow-creatures, or because the vegetable happens to curl a different way, or the wind instrument, with which they are furnished for making an intelligible noise, chances to have a particular tone, they become so desirous of living all their lives together, that if they are not permitted to do so, they will be quite ready to take means for reducing their soul-case to its original elements. All this is very curious, it must be confessed—I will watch the process."

"Come, chevalier," cried Laura, just at that moment, "put on your hat, and come out with Henry and me,—we will take you a long walk through the country, and show you every thing that is pretty round about."

The chevalier very willingly complied, and while Laura, hanging on Worrel's arm, led the way through shady lanes and through green fields, he went on with his examination of that strange, but sweet thing, love, and could not but own, as he saw the mutual glance of warm affection, the playful smile that spoke the heart's passion without words, the long sigh drawn in the fulness of happiness, and perceived how love, like the bee, extracts honey from every object that it passes—he could not but own, I say, that, however strange, it is very delightful. There was a simplicity and a truth in the lovers too, that to his eyes, who could see their hearts, gave a sort of a holy brightness to their affection. Their confidence in each other seemed to beget a confidence in all around them, in their own happiness, in nature, in man, in God; and wandering on together, plucking flowers from the banks, pausing to look into this calm sweet glen, or over that wide dazzling prospect, listening to the song of the birds, or scenting the fresh dawning air, it was evident that they expected their life to be like that summer day's walk where tranquil enjoyment and peaceful variety awaited them at every step.

The chevalier resolved, though forbidden to use any of the greater powers he possessed, to exert himself to the utmost in every other way to promote the happiness of the lovers. "I can surely persuade the old gentleman," he said to himself, "to a better view of this affair."—But the chevalier little knew how obstinate a father can be when his daughter's happiness is concerned. All the gentlemen of antiquity, who sacrificed, or ever thought of sacrificing, their daughters, from Jephtha to Agamemnon, are nothing to a modern papa, with rank, fortune, or fashion, as the idol before him.

However that may be, the Chevalier de Lunatico, Laura, and Worrel, like every other being, lunar or terrestrial, reckoned without their host. The learned and disputatious reader may perhaps stop me here, and inquire, who is the host, that we so frequently reckon without; who spoils the account of misers when they look upon their treasure, and think that they will possess it for ever; of lovers when they gaze upon their mistress, and think that a few hours shall place her in their arms; of conquerors, when they scan the bloody field, and say, "but one step more to a throne" In all these cases, truly there is a dark and awful host that mocks our estimate, and brings in a very different bill against us. That host is, Fate!

The walking party had just passed through a broad sandy road, that led straight through a wood to a brow of a hill, and were gazing over the fair forest scene, with a blue distance of fields, and hills, and villages beyond, when a servant on horseback, in a splendid livery, galloped up, and put a note into Harry Worrel's hand. He opened it and read, and a peculiar expression came over his countenance, a look of anxious thoughtfulness, which at once made the Chevalier de Lunatico perceive that something was the matter. The fair Laura also appeared to have some suspicion that the note was not of a pleasant kind, for she asked him, laughingly, what it was about, adding something in regard to woman's curiosity.

"Nothing, Laura, nothing," replied Harry Worrel, putting it into his pocket: "an invitation to a ball at Outrun Castle."

"Oh! we shall have a card, too," said Laura; "but I certainly shall not go. I detest that Henry Frederick Fitzurse."

"I don't think you will be invited," said Worrel, gravely: "you have shown your dislike to him very plainly, Laura."

The conversation there dropped, and the chevalier and his friends took their way back towards the house. They had contrived, however, to spend more than four hours in their ramble, by the time they reached home, and the fair Laura, complaining that her pretty little feet were tired, went in to rest herself, while Worrel and the chevalier took a turn together in the garden.

"And now, my young friend," said Mr. de Lunatico, "what were the contents of that note? I must entreat you to let me know, for I feel very sure that it contained no invitation to a ball."

"To a *pistol ball*," said Worrell, gravely: "and I really do not know where to seek a friend upon the occasion. My cousin, Mr. Longmore, is out of the question in such a business as this, and you, my dear chevalier——"

"Will be very happy to assist you," he replied, interrupting his companion. "You know we people of the moon are the greatest duellists in the universe, and sooner or later we have every man that fights another upon this earth sent up, by warrant, to take his place in the lunatic world. That, however, is not exactly my object in offering to accompany you; that object I will explain afterwards; but, in the first place, tell me, what is the cause of quarrel assigned by your honourable opponent, or has he any quarrel with you at all?"

"None whatever," replied Worrel. "He simply demands that I should give up all claim to the hand of Laura Longmore, cease to visit at her father's house for the next six months, and quit this part of the country, or fight him without further delay. Now, as I certainly shall not resign my claim upon Laura's hand till I resign my life, I suppose I must give him the meeting he requires; though, heaven knows, if he was to shoot me to-morrow, there is no chance of his obtaining Laura, for she herself detests him; and I have often heard Mr. Longmore himself say, that he is puzzled to know whether Henry Fitzurse is most knave, fool, or debauchee. Fight him, however, I must."

"Oh! certainly, certainly," said the chevalier; "upon the very most approved principles of society, which, by a general and invariable law, gives every blackguard, villain, scoundrel, knave, and ass, a right to fire one or two pistol-shots at any good and exemplary man whom he chooses to call upon, while that man has the great compensation of firing at him again in return, if he thinks fit to do so—though perhaps he may look upon it as murder. Oh, say not a word more; I know all about duelling; we have a space put apart for that species of amusement in the moon."

"You are very severe," said Henry Worrel; "and I abhor the practice as much as you can do; but I see not how it can be avoided,

either in my own, or in many other instances. You would not, surely, have me give up Laura at the wild bullying of this Henry Fitzurse!"

"Oh, no," replied the chevalier, "that is quite impossible; but I think, on the contrary, that there is a very good chance of your making him give her up."

"How so?" demanded Worrel, eagerly. "Though I care not much whether he gives her up or not, for her father would certainly never marry her to such an animal as that."

It was very evident, from the tone in which he spoke, that Worrel did not feel quite so certain of the matter as his words implied; and the Chevalier de Lunatico thought it right to undeceive him altogether. No words can express the poor young man's despair when he heard the purposes of Mr. Longmore; but the chevalier comforted him in some degree by saying:—

"I have a plan for you, my good young friend, by which, as I told you, we may perhaps, drive this Fitzurse out of the field. I hear he is a desperate coward, and his sending you such an insolent letter only shows that such is the case. Show yourself more ready to fight him than he is to fight you: write him, this very night, an answer, telling him that you will not bear such conduct for a single day: appoint the meeting for the earliest possible hour to-morrow morning, and tell him that he or you do not quit the field alive. I think I could take upon myself to say, that he will instantly attempt to withdraw his cartel: and, as I will bear your note to him, I will give him the opportunity of so doing, upon condition that he quits the pursuit of the fair Laura for ever."

Harry Worrel looked down upon the ground for a moment or two in silence. He was as brave as any man need be—as ready to front danger and death, when needful, as any man in Europe. He knew also, that it is well to do a disagreeable thing, when it must be done, as speedily as possible: so that his judgment told him the plan proposed by his dear, new-found friend was the very best that could be devised: yet there was something in the idea of so speedily parting with the bright things of life, of leaving perhaps but one anxious night between him and fate—of parting, in a few short hours, very likely for ever, with the dear being who had become the charm of his existence: there was something in all this, I say, that made him thoughtful. His mind, however, was soon made up; and, as the human heart is but a bit of cork upon the top of the waves of life, now tossed up, now sinking down, but never going to the bottom altogether, his heart rose the next instant, and he proceeded to act upon the suggestion of the chevalier, having very good reason to know that those who calculated upon his opponent's cowardice were not likely to be far astray. The whole matter was now soon settled: the day was by this time wearing towards the evening, and it was agreed that the chevalier and his young friend should ride over together that night to a small village, near Outrun Castle, as if intending to make an expedition to some curious old Roman remains on the following morning; that the chevalier should carry Harry Worrell's note from

the village that night, and that they should wait at the small inn at the place till the proposed meeting of the following morning, in case the result of Mr. de Lunatico's plan was not such as they anticipated.

Mr. Longmore, as the reader knows, had his own peculiar habits, and amongst others was that of dining at half-past four o'clock precisely, in which vicious practice he had indulged for at least thirty years. Great was the uneasiness that this occasioned at various times; for, although we have invented steam-kitchens, we have not yet, alas! been able to invent steam-cooks. Mr. Longmore regulated his clocks by the sun every day; but, alas! he could not regulate the tenants of the kitchen. Sometimes the dinner would be five minutes too soon, sometimes it would be five minutes too late, and sometimes the cook's thumb held back the march of old time upon the face of the dial, by a dexterous application to the longer of those two wandering hands, which, very much like the course of human knowledge, are always moving on from hour to hour, yet never getting any farther from the one central point to which they are fixed down. This event—and it was not unfrequent—both annoyed and puzzled the old philosopher. He had the best clocks and watches in Europe, and yet there was something in the atmosphere of the kitchen which made the finest piece of mechanism that ever was invented go wrong as soon as it got there. Such was the case on the present day: dinner was not on the table for a full quarter of an hour after half-past four by Mr. Longmore's own chronometer. The cook appealed to her clock, the clock justified the cook, and Mr. Longmore, in a state of considerable excitement, cried "Pish!" at the fish, "Pshaw!" at the soup, and was only restored to equanimity by the sight of a venison pasty, the inner parts of which were a present from Outrun park. It was with some difficulty, then, that a favourable moment was found for communicating to the old gentleman the proposed expedition of Harry Worrel and the chevalier to the Roman remains, in the neighbourhood of Outrun Castle, and when it was done Mr. Longmore looked surprised, and Laura surprised, and not well satisfied. The good philosopher, however, soon made up his mind to the matter, agreed that early in the morning was the best time to see the ruins, regretted greatly that he could not be of the party, which was impossible, as he had a little affair with the sun about that time, but offered, for the chevalier's use, his own neat cantering cob galloway, which, like every thing else that he possessed, was, in Mr. Longmore's estimation, the best thing of its kind in the world. This being settled, the pony saddled and brought round, and a parting glass drank to the success of their expedition, the chevalier and his young friend took leave to depart. Laura shook hands with them both, but the Chevalier de Lunatico thought that he perceived in her countenance an expression somewhat sad and reproachful as she bade her lover adieu. He saw at once that she had suspicions that their errand was not that which it seemed. However, as no man ever yet considered the feelings of his wife, the situation of his children, the happiness, or even the existence of any of his friends or dependents,

or, in short, any other such minor and unimportant matters, when he was going to yield to the fashion of the world, Harry Worrel tore himself away with as comfortable an air as he could assume, and mounting his own horse, while Mr. de Lunatico bestrode the round, cantering, cob galloway of good Mr. Longmore, they set off at a quiet pace, in the cool calmness of a fine spring evening.

For a couple of miles they were very silent, but at length the chevalier, always having the end of his perquisitions in view, thought fit to address a few questions to his companion; inquiring in the first place, in a quiet, easy tone, whether he went upon this affair with the most comfortable feelings in the world.

"Not exactly," answered Harry Worrel, with that peculiar sort of candour which the chevalier engendered in all with whom he was brought in contact. "In the first place, my dear chevalier, I look upon duelling as criminal, as foolish, and as blackguard. I wouldn't tell any body but you for the world that such are my opinions, and I shall certainly take care on all occasions to make every body believe that I go to fight my man as quietly as I sit down to eat my dinner; and that I look upon the practice as absolutely necessary to society, for the purpose of giving every man, who is injured or insulted, a sort of *ultima ratio* to which there is no reply. In the next place, I don't like the idea of being killed at all, and, do what I will to prevent it, the thought of a nasty, hard bullet coming and sticking into me like a piece of hot iron, will present itself to my imagination. Nevertheless, as I have tolerably good nerves, not very easily shaken, that will never prevent me from going out with an unpleasant friend. The thing that is most disagreeable to me, is, I confess, the thought of killing a fellow creature in cold blood. I know and feel, and am perfectly aware, that I am just as much committing a murder as if I cut a man's throat in his bed, and ought to be hanged for it too, only, thank God, we have plenty of jury-men in England, who are quite ready to perjure themselves whenever a gentleman thinks fit to shoot another through the head, and to find him not guilty, though, if a poor man had done it, driven by starvation, they would hang him as high as Haman. Thus I am sure of immunity in this world; and, as to the next, Macbeth says:—

————— If the assassination
 Could trammel up the consequences, and catch
 With this surcease, success; that but this blow
 Might be the be-all, and the end-all here—
 But here upon this bank and shoal of time—
 We'd jump the world to come."

Besides, this sort of murder, unlike all others, is punished by the world, if we do not commit it, and not if we do. So now, my dear chevalier, having told you all I think upon this subject, let us change the topic, for on my life it isn't a pleasant one, and I would rather think of something else."

"With all my heart," said the chevalier, muttering to himself. "He won't quite do for the moon. But pray tell me, good Mr. Worrel, what

is your relationship to worthy Mr. Longmore? I have heard from certain persons that a body of lunatics, a good many years ago enacted a code of laws, by which cousins to the third or fourth degree, were forbidden from marrying."

"Oh, we have changed all that," said Harry Worrel. "In our country we did away with all the prohibitions in regard to marrying near relations, except, exactly brothers and sisters, uncles and nieces, grandmothers and grandsons; but in pure opposition to the Bible we have retained strictly the prohibition in regard to a widow marrying her brother-in-law, or a man marrying his dead wife's sister, though the latter is the most natural marriage in the world, and one which is likely to prove the happiest for the first wife's children, if she leave any."

The obstacle, between Laura and myself, my dear sir, is want of rank and fortune, on my part; and poor Laura and I both fear, when we give ourselves time to think of it, that this obstacle will never be removed; for good Mr. Longmore, notwithstanding all his philosophy, has so great a reverence for wealth and title, and so great a hatred for poverty and democracy, that I am afraid there is very little chance of obtaining his consent, unless I can obtain wealth and distinction in the first place."

"You must try, my young friend, you must try," said the chevalier; "and, perhaps, if you were to make up your mind to quit your fair Laura for a month or two, and go on a tour with me, you might have opportunities of looking about you, which you will not easily find under other circumstances. Think of it, think of it; and now go on with your story."

"I have no story to tell," replied Harry, "or at least a very short one. My father was nephew to good Mr. Longmore, who did not marry till late in life, and being determined, as he thought, not to marry at all, he engaged my parent to quit the bar, at which he was practising with some success, in London, and come down and stay with him, intending to make him his heir. Scarcely, however, had my father been here three years, when Mr. Longmore, as gentlemen of fifty-five will sometimes do, thought fit to fall in love with a girl of twenty, married her, and in due time was the father of my sweet Laura. Not being in want of an heir any longer, he did not know well what to do with my father, whose prospects at the bar were spoiled. He obtained for him, therefore, the agency of the castle Outrun estates, in the neighbourhood of which both my parents were born; but at the end of five or six years, my father died, and my mother was left with but a very small income. My uncle, however, who was an officer in the army, assisted her as far as his means would permit, though his own fortune was very limited. He was extremely kind to us as long as he lived, and many a time do I remember him coming down, holding me in his arms like a second father, and loading me with little presents and toys. But my poor uncle was killed at the last great battle, and though he left to my mother and myself all his little property, to the amount of about two hundred a year, it did not at all console us for his loss."

"And is your mother still living?" demanded the chevalier.

"No," replied Worrell, in a grave tone, "I am alone."

There was a degree of melancholy in his manner which struck the chevalier, and prevented him from proceeding; for it must be recollected that the few drops which that gentleman had taken out of his phial, had taught him at once to sympathise with Harry Worrell and Laura; and he found his condition very unpleasant in consequence. Every man has enough to do with his own griefs, and should not meddle with other people's; and thus the Chevalier de Lunatico now discovered that he had done a very foolish act in dabbling with sympathy at all.

"I will never do it again as long as I live," said the chevalier.

But the chevalier's resolutions were like other men's, as the reader will see before he gets to the end of the history. However that may be, the two jogged on in silence beside one another for a distance and a time that would have killed a Frenchman; and as they did so, the universe began to put on its gray dressing-gown, previous to the world's going to bed. The figure may seem a strange one, and certainly is not so pretty as that of Shakespeare, when he says—

"See when the morn in russet mantle clad
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill."

But what I mean by it is, that the light began to forsake the sky, and all things around fell into the dusky hue of evening.

At length, as they were passing a finger-post, where a road branched off from that which they were pursuing, Harry Worrell renewed the conversation by saying,—

"A few furlongs farther, and we are at the little inn, which is as comfortable a one as any man could choose to pass a quiet evening in; but, as you are destined for another ride to-night, my dear friend, pray, remark that road on the left; for it takes you onward in a straight line to Outrun Castle. At the distance of about a mile, you will come to the wall of the park, which extends for nearly two miles along the road, without any break, gap, or interval, except the two gates; the first of which is a large iron one, without any lodge, only opened upon great occasions. The other gate, about half a mile beyond, has a lodge, and there you will gain admittance. I think you had better set off very soon after we get to the inn, that we may take our measures according to your report."

"We'll wait till the moon is up," said the chevalier; "I like to ride in the moonlight. It is an old habit of mine; but in the meantime you have to write your letter, and you must think about the pistols, too."

"I will send for them," replied Worrell; "I have a pair belonging to my uncle; and as to the letter, it will soon be written; but the moon rises at nine o'clock, and that cannot be far off."

All was pleasant, and if we may use the term, quiet bustle at the little inn, on the arrival of Harry Worrell and his companion. The former seemed well known to the landlady and to all the servants of the

house; and many were the respectful gratulations which he received, as he dismounted from his horse. The good hostess was a widow—certainly past the prime of life—but still so fat, so fair, so rosy, and so smiling, with lips so pouting, eyes so bright, and hair so little mixed with gray, that what between her good looks, the reputation of having made her first husband very happy, and the certainty of her being well to do in the world, many a gay swain in the village and the neighbourhood had shown an unequivocal disposition to occupy the place which good Josiah Muggins had left vacant.—Mrs. Muggins, however, looked upon a husband as a piece of bedroom furniture that might very well be dispensed with by a lady in her fiftieth year; and, consequently, though she was kind and civil to every body, laughed with one, and jested with another, sold ale to all who would drink it, and gave away a good many trifles to the poor and needy, she showed herself much less liberal to her lovers; would insist upon regarding all their sweet things as a joke; and with a propriety which we recommend much to the consideration of all young ladies, never suffered any man to come to a declaration, being resolved not to accept him if he did.

By this good dame, as we have said, was Harry Worrel not only civilly but affectionately received.

“Lord bless you, dear life!” she said, “how happy I am to see you—what a time it is since you have been at the Half-Moon!”

The Chevalier de Lunatico pricked up his ears; but Mrs. Muggins proceeded,—

“All your old friends will be so happy to see you, sir, if you stay a little while in the village. Here, Sally, get ready number two for Master Harry, and number three for the other gentleman; I see they are come to stay. John Ostler, take round the gentlemen’s horses. Lord bless you, sir, I know when gentlemen intend to stop the night with half an eye. Here, Joey Pike, show Master Harry into the little parlour. I have had a leetle bit of fire lighted in it, sir, this afternoon, to keep it warm, for the nights are still frosty. Joey Pike, I say, what do you stand there in an attitude for, thinking yourself the Polly of Belvidere? Lord bless the lad! with his airs and graces. Be quick, I say.”

“Ah, Joey,” cried Worrel, addressing a lad who was intended for a waiter, but who was decorated with a crimson velvet waistcoat, and a green silk handkerchief round his neck, “ah, Joey, have you come back into the country? Why, I thought you had got a good place in London.”

“Yes, sir, I had,” answered Joey Pike, in a sweet and lisping tone, and with a low and graceful bow; “but my poor master was inclined to a consumption, and recommended to Italian climes; so I accompanied him, sir, to Naples—Bella Napoli, as they call it—where he died under my hands. For the last six weeks, sir, I fed him night and day with *vollycents* and *consummy*, thinking to keep his strength up; but he fell into a *faiblese*, as the French call it, and went from *sing-cuppy* to *sing-cuppy*, till he drew the last sigh; and, to my infinite

regret, expired. He left me with a strong recommendation to his friends ; but I will never have a strong recommendation as long as I live again. It is the worst thing in the world, sir ; for they kept me on in London, always promising to get me a good place, until I was very nearly upon the *pavy*, and never did any thing for me after all. I waited till I had spent every thing but fourteen shillings and ninepence ; and then I said to myself, fourteen shillings is just the fair on the top of the *diligence* down to Outrun ; fivepence will get me a roll and a couple of red herrings, and with the fourpence that remains, I can say with the doctors, *fiat haustus*, which means, I am told, take a draught. Says I to myself, there's good Mrs. Muggins, a *bong femme*, if ever there was one," and he laid his hand upon his heart, and bowed his head gracefully towards the landlady ; but she, on her part, cut him short, exclaiming,—

"Hold your tongue, you fool, Joey, and show the gentlemen into the parlour. Will you keep them in the passage all night ?"

"Madam, I will do it *incessantly*," replied Joey, and marching a step or two forward, he threw open the door with an exquisite wave of the hand, drew himself up, with his head a little leaning on the right side, and his feet in the fifth position, and suffering them to pass in, followed with the good landlady to ascertain their farther wants and wishes.

"Nothing, thank you, Mrs. Muggins," replied Worrel to the lady's inquiries ; "nothing but some tea and toast, a pen and ink, and a few sheets of writing paper. Will you send in the tea made, Mrs. Muggins?"

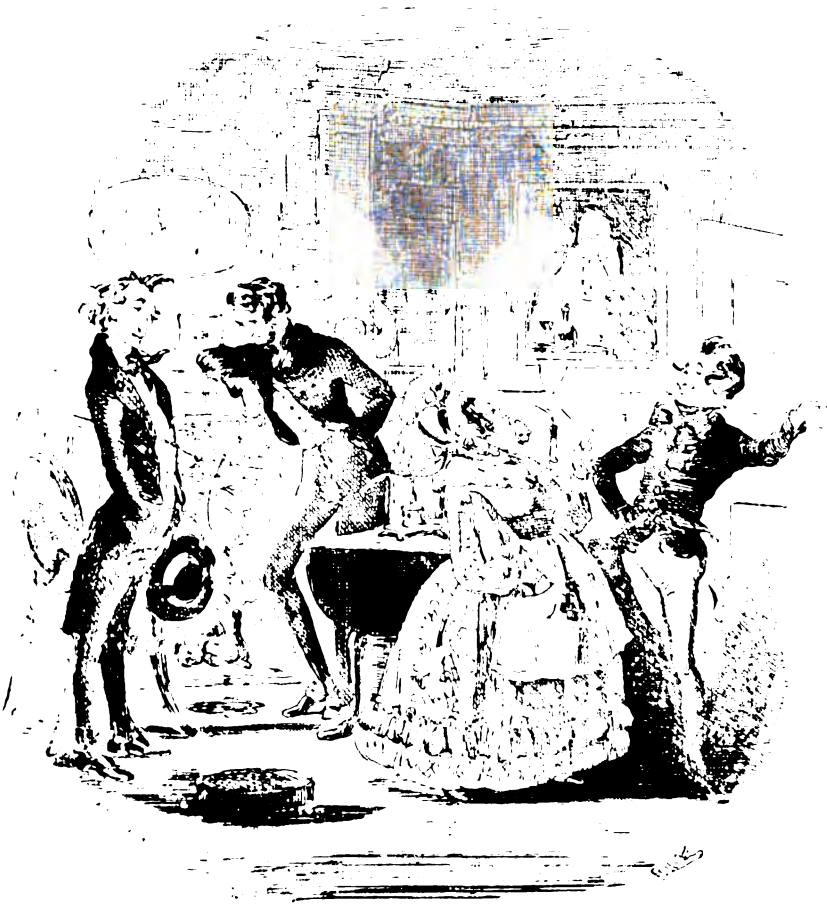
"For the paper I will be responsible," cried Joey Pike ; "where can the *inky-ostro* be? I mean the inkstand, Mrs. Muggins, and *quelle piume* that I left here only this morning. That's the barmaid's doing, Mrs. Muggins. She has taken them, I'll warrant. I'd teach her, if I were you, to feather her nest with other things than pens out of the parlour."

"There they are you fool in the corner cupboard," said Mrs. Muggins. "Put them down quick, and then go out of the room. You only tease the gentlemen with your chattering and your scraps of languages not half so good as your own."

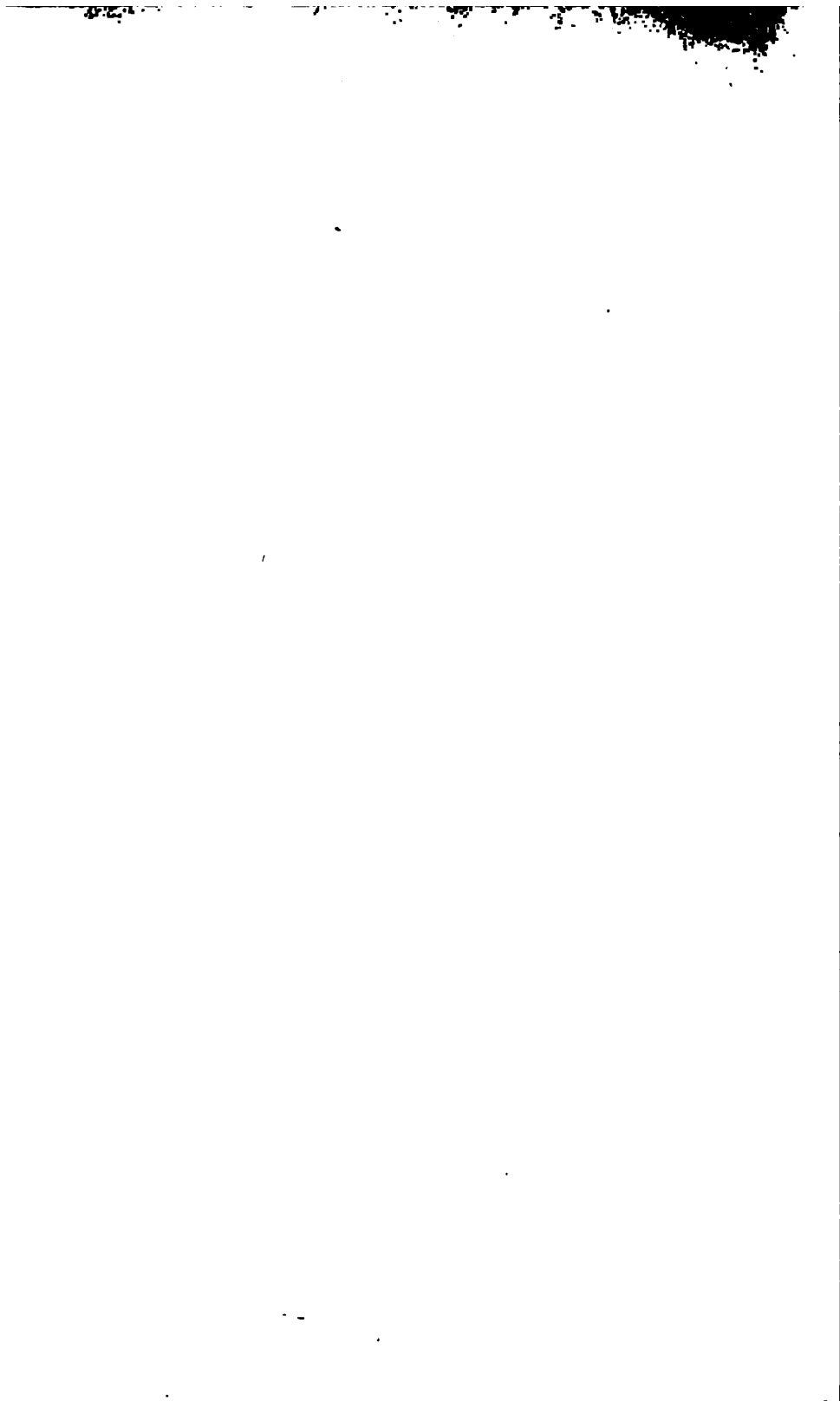
Joey Pike drew himself up, "I am not accustomed to chatter, madam," he said, with an air of impressive dignity, "though on this occasion, my *bonnhoor*, at seeing Master Harry again so unexpectedly, may have increased my loquacity."

Thus saying, he placed the inkstand and pens upon the table, waved Mrs. Muggins gracefully to precede him, and then with a motion somewhat like that of a cat stealing up to a bird, followed her out of the room, closing the door after him in the most noiseless possible manner.

The parlour was a low-roofed wainscotted chamber, with a fire-place, which, as that is not a coal district, was unconscious of any fuel but wood. The dark brown oak on the walls, the mouldings and the cornices, though a little warped by the effect of many a drying summer's



... her visit to the 'July moon'.



sun, were all as neatly polished and varnished as possible. The floor and drugget that covered it were as clean as it is possible to conceive. The bright mahogany of the table reflected the light of the candles like a mirror; and, in short, there was an air of homely cheerfulness about the aspect of the whole chamber which made one feel very comfortable in the enjoyment of life, and all life's blessings. It accorded ill with the feelings and purposes of Harry Worrel at that moment; for though it is a very difficult thing to say where death is least unpalatable, yet it certainly is not where we find ourselves very comfortable in life. The Chevalier de Lunatico, however, had just time to stir the blazing pieces of wood on the hearth, and Harry Worrel to gaze round the well-known room, recalling the memories of many a pleasant day, when Joey Pike returned with a quire of paper, which he dropped delicately before the latter gentleman, maintaining the most profound silence, for the purpose of disproving Mrs. Muggins's charge of loquacity.

The Chevalier de Lunatico, however, seemed inclined to enter into conversation with him; for after telling him to see that his horse was not unsaddled, as he had another ride to take that night, he asked him what time the moon would be visible. Joey was seldom, if ever, found at fault; and on this occasion he gave the chevalier an account of the very moment when the planet would rise, and when she would appear above the neighbouring trees. "We had last night," he said, "a magnificent *clare de Loon*, and I trust that the same will be the case to-night, for the sky is *poorissimo*."

"I trust that it may be so," said the chevalier; "and so, my good fellow, you have been seeking a place?"

"Yes, sir, yes," replied Joey, "I have been seeking what my Italian friends call a *piazza*, but I found none but the piazza of Covent-garden, which is certainly not the best place that any young man could find, especially when he is somewhat subject to the tender passion."

"Joey, Joey," cried the voice of the landlady. "That chattering boy is teasing the gentlemen again—this will never do—I shall be obliged to get rid of him. Yet he is a clever boy, and a good one—I declare I do not know what to do—Joey, Joey, I say."

"*Organo, Organo*," cried Joey, "she is an excellent woman, that Mrs. Muggins, a good, motherly, excellent person, but she cannot bear any person to talk but herself," and thus saying, he hurried out of the room, leaving the chevalier to his own meditations, and Harry Worrel to the composition of the letter, which he had already begun.

The letter was soon written, the chevalier mounted his horse and rode away, and Harry Worrel stood alone in the little parlour with his back to the wood fire, which by this time had crackled itself to sleep, and was lying in glowing embers amidst white ashes on the hearth, like the cheerful light which sometimes remains to brighten a happy old age. His thoughts were of his father's house. It is difficult to tell why: but when any of those pauses take place which sometimes come in amidst the fiercest struggles and most striking events of life—one of those

pauses that occur *between* the purpose and the act, between the excited passion and the result—I know not why it is, but the mind always reverts to the calm sweet hours of youth and boyhood, to the peaceful scenes in which our early days were past, to innocent enjoyments, pleasures that we can taste no longer, feelings that can be felt no more. Worrel's thoughts, I say, were of his father's house, which had been situated not far from the spot where he then stood, and under the influence of the moment, pageant-like visions of happy sports amidst the woods and fields around, the merry game, the quickly past sorrow, the fleeting cloud and the gay sunshine of infancy came up before the wand of the enchanter, Memory, as if to contrast themselves in their ghostly beauty with the eager wishes, and the fierce anxieties of manhood.

He had not long indulged in this manner, when the door quietly opened, and in glided his good landlady with a lighter step than might have been anticipated from the ample volume of good things she bore about with her.

"Beg pardon for intruding, Master Harry," she said; "but I could not help coming in, now the other gentleman is gone, to say how glad I am to see you again—why it is full a twelvemonth since you have been here: I thought you had forgotten us all."

"Oh, no," replied Harry Worrel, "I never forget old friends. Pray sit down, Mrs. Muggins, and pour me out another cup of tea. I shall like it the better if it comes from your hand."

"Lord, Master Harry!" said the landlady, sitting down with a simper, and a well pleased air. "However, many's the cup of tea I have made for you in other days, ay, and for the colonel too, and I should never wish to make tea for a nicer man."

"He was here a great deal after my father's death," said Harry abstractedly.

"Ay, and before too," said the landlady: "a very handsome man he was as ever I set eyes upon. I recollect him before you were born, Master Harry, and all the girls in the village were dying for him, and so were a great many others more in his own station, one in particular, but that was a sad story."

"I never heard it," said Worrel, "what was that?"

"Why, did you never hear of Lady Maria falling in love with him?" said the landlady; "my lord's daughter here up at the castle, that is to say the old lord's daughter, and how they found her walking secretly with him in the park, and the quarrel that took place, and the duel between your uncle and the present lord? Why they fought in the lane between the two walls, and your uncle shot my lord, and left him for dead, and then Lady Maria was sent away for a long time, and it preyed upon her mind, poor thing, and she faded, just as one sees a flower do, when one plucks it and gives it no water. She never forgot her love, that she didn't, poor girl; for I recollect, at length, when your father and mother came down—at the time Mr. Longmore talked of making him his heir, and they stayed at this house with you, then a little boy—she came in suddenly one day to see

them, but something was said, I suppose, that made her think of past times, for she fainted dead away, and I was called to help her. We could not bring her to for near an hour, and then she cried as if her heart would break, poor thing. So she was nearly two hours in the house altogether, and yet terribly afraid all the time that people should send to seek her. However, nothing came of it then, but she was ill at the time, and she got worse from that hour till she died."

"Poor thing," said Harry Worrel, with feelings of affection and tenderness rising up in his heart for a being of whose existence he had not the slightest idea five minutes before.

It is a strange thing the human body, and a strange thing the human mind, that a certain number of percussions of the air, produced by the lungs, and modulated by the glottis, epiglottis, tongue, teeth, and lips of the hostess, should make Worrel's bosom feel very queer, and his eyes to have a strong inclination to run over with tears, as if he had been a pump, and somebody had worked the handle. If man is a mere galvanic machine, as some philosophers believe, he is a very curious one—but somehow, I do not think that it is so.

However that may be, it is high time to follow the other two pieces of mechanism, who were making their way on in the moonlight towards Outrun Castle, namely, the Chevalier de Lunatico and his horse. The cantering galloway proceeded at a quiet, comfortable pace, just as he had been accustomed to employ when carrying Mr. Longmore after a pair of slate-coloured greyhounds, before the hare, which they were destined to run after, had been found, poor thing, sitting in her plashy form; and Mr. de Lunatico exceedingly comfortable both in the moonshine where he was quite in his element, and in rapid and easy motion,—which certainly is a thing that must be most agreeable to every one, except, perhaps, a tortoise, who objects to all velocity, and a frog, who loves to advance *saltim*.—went on considering the characters of the persons he had lately seen, and the best means of pursuing his investigations farther. After he had done with those subjects, he took to looking at the country, and could not help thinking it very like some of the scenes he had beheld in his own sphere. The night was as beautiful a one as it was possible to see, and his way ran through a wooded lane. For some way it was fringed on either side by scrubby oaks—occasionally approaching close to the road, and narrowing it within two hedges—occasionally breaking away and leaving a space of rugged ground with dingles, dells, and high banks, in which the moonlight and the dark shadow lay quietly side by side, like husband and wife joined together for life, a sort of Desdemona and Othello. At length, however, a good tall brick wall appeared, flanking the lane on the right hand, while a high bank rose on the other side with a hedge running along the top for some way, which, after a certain extent again gave place to masonry, and another wall appeared with some hawthorn bushes and some brambles at its foot.

Had the chevalier heard the landlady's story, he would have said to himself, "This is the place where Colonel Worrel fought his sweetheart's brother;" but as it was, he was unconscious of the

interest of the scene, and he and his horse cantered on together without saying a word to each other. He had gone about half a mile between these two walls when suddenly a figure started out from the bushes we have talked of, caught hold of his bridle, put a pistol to his breast, and asked him for his money. As this is a commodity with which he had been plentifully supplied before he set out, and as he was well aware that all his expenses were to be paid, upon the same liberal scale as other diplomatists, whereas, a hole through his body was not likely to be amended without considerable difficulty, the chevalier put his hand in his pocket, pulled out a considerable handful, and bestowed it upon the covetous stranger with the best grace in the world. His applicant, however, was not satisfied, but in a thundering tone of voice commanding him to stand as still as a stock-fish, in that exact spot, while he ran away.

The chevalier neither assented nor dissented, but suffered the worthy gentleman to proceed about a hundred yards, and then followed him at a wary pace, fully resolved to see where he went to, but to keep a tolerable space of ground between them. The moon, most complacently, shone bright down the lane, so that the figure of the robber, who was a tall, stout, heavy man, was as clear and distinct as if it had been day light; and the chevalier rode on perfectly certain of being able to trace him, especially as the walls soon became clear of all brushwood at the foot, and there seemed not the slightest possibility of escape. When the man with the pistols found that he was followed, he appeared very furious, paused, shouted, and held up his hand with a threatening gesture; but as he halted, the chevalier halted—as he went on, the chevalier went on—and thus they had proceeded for about five hundred yards, when suddenly to Mr. de Lunatico's horror, surprise, and astonishment, the stout personage he was pursuing suddenly disappeared, as if he had been swallowed up by the earth. He now rode on in haste, but nothing could he discover of his fugitive friend, nor any possible means of escape. There were the great gates of the park, it is true, at no great distance, but they consisted of nothing but a tall grating of iron, over which it was impossible to climb, and on shaking them with his hand the chevalier found that they were firmly locked.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHEVALIER PROPOSES A NEW WAY OF STOPPING HIGHWAY ROBBERY—HE IS INTRODUCED TO SOME GENTLEMEN OF RANK AND CONSEQUENCE—FINDS THE SOFT SOLICITOR IN AN UNEXPECTED SITUATION.

NOT a little puzzled was Mr. de Lunatico. He paused, he considered, he turned the matter every possible way in his mind, and yet he could make nothing of it: and finding that such was positively the case, he wisely gave the matter up, and rode on. About a quarter of a mile in advance, the chevalier came to the lesser gates with the lodge attached, at which he had been told to apply, and ringing a large bell that presented itself to his hand on the right side, he was admitted in a minute by a rosy boy in a smock frock. The chevalier having entered, found himself in face of the lodge, the door of which was open, with a scene of comfortable peasant-life presented within, such as perhaps is not to be met with in any other country than England. The aspect was so pleasant and cheerful, that the chevalier dismounted from his horse, and went in not only to ask his way up to the house, but also to give notice of the robbery which had been committed. He expected to find nothing but contentment and happiness, but in this he was mistaken. The mastiff-like growl of the English peasant was not banished even there; and when he spoke to the man about the pleasant look of his cottage, and the comfortable life he must lead, the good fellow found half-a-dozen things to grumble at, and his wife chimed in with half-a-dozen more. When they heard of the robbery, however, they both shook their heads, exclaiming, "What, again? There have been a good many there, sir, lately, and nobody has ever been able to discover who does it, or how it is done. It had stopped for a fortnight, and so we thought the thing was over; I am sorry it's begun again, for this, you see, is the chief road between Outrun and Market Greenford, and all the poor market-women will be losing their money as they come home of a night."

"Let them all club together, and baste the villain heartily," said the Chevalier de Lunatico, or let them scratch his eyes out, or set him in the middle of them, and talk at him till he is dead. Twenty or thirty women could easily punish one man in various ways."

"Ah, sir, but perhaps there are many of them," said the woman.

"These are hard times, sir," said the man in a gruff tone, "and drive many a poor fellow to take to the road. Would you like the boy to go up and show you the way to the house?" he continued impatiently, for an English peasant soon has enough of talking to a gentleman; and as he spoke, he returned with zeal and devotion to the toasting of his

bacon. The chevalier, however, having learned the way, declined the boy's assistance, and remounting the cantering galloway, who had looked round several times to see if he was coming, he proceeded easily along the road which led towards Castle Outrun itself. He was in no hurry, it is true, to quit so fair a scene as that which spread around him, for the well-gravelled road lay amidst those wild expanses of green turf, occasional clumps of magnificent trees, wild hill sides covered with fern, deep, dingy dells, and from time to time, pieces of water, which characterize an English park, and the whole was silvered over with the brightest moonshine. Seen at that period of the night, when the chevalier approached it, the mansion itself was certainly an imposing pile of building, consisting of large masses of stone-work in the castellated style, with small windows peeping out here and there, and a broad terrace spreading round. The moonlight was sufficient to show the grand features of the place, but none of the defects. Had the sun been there, grass growing amongst the gravel of the terrace, stones falling from different parts of the building, windows broken and shut up, and many a sign of that decay which springs—not from age and the slow wearing hand of time—but from the tooth of the fell destroyer, neglect, would have been very apparent. Even as it was, the place had any thing but a cheerful aspect; from some windows in one wing, indeed, the shutters of which had not been closed, a glare of light was streaming forth; but that did not much enliven a building the rest of which was all dark, giving it the look of a man with one eye. Sounds of laughter and merriment, however, were heard from within as the chevalier approached the door, but ceased at once as he pulled the bell rope, producing a long, loud peal in the empty hall. Two smart servants, with powdered heads and flaming liveries, soon after appeared, and in answer to the chevalier's demand for the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse, said that he was still at dinner with the noble lord his father. "Pray, inform him," said the visitor, "that the Chevalier de Lunatico wishes to speak with him for a few minutes."

The lackeys stared at him with an air that would have been very insolent, had not Mr. de Lunatico's peculiar gifts produced a feeling of communicativeness in those two gentlemen which they could not at all resist. "He'll be precious unwilling to see you, unless he knows who you are, old chap," said one of them.

"I dare say he'll think it is a bailiff," said the other; "but I can tell you, if you are, you have very little regard for your own skin to come down here."

"Assure the honourable gentleman that I am no bailiff at all," replied the chevalier, "but merely a foreign gentleman travelling in this country; and happening accidentally to have a little important business to talk with him about."

"Well, come in, come in," said one of the men. "John take care of this gentleman's horse for a minute. Come into this little room, old chap, and I'll tell Mr. Fitzurse in a minute."

"The man is drunk," thought the Chevalier de Lunatico, following into a small empty room on the opposite side of the hall; and though the term drunk, probably gave an exaggerated idea of the condition of

the worthy domestic, certain it is, that his intellects were not in that perfect state of equilibrium which more frequently precedes than follows abundant potations. While the chevalier sat in meditative mood, the servant advanced through a certain long stone passage, with that peculiar gravity of step assumed by persons labouring under an impression, that it is very difficult to keep a straight line, and entering the dining-room, advanced to the place where Mr. Fitzurse was seated, and told him in a low and confidential tone, that a gentleman wanted to speak with him.

"D—n him, let him wait," said Mr. Fitzurse, who was at that moment entombing the wing of an infant duck, "I know what it is. It's that business of Betsy Trollop."

"No, sir," rejoined his servant, "it's not the overseer. It's a foreign gentleman, with a long funny name, which slipped away from me in the passage. Signor Mousetrappico, I think it was."

"I'll bet you any money, Fitzurse," cried a good-looking, somewhat rosy fellow on the other side of the table, with black hair, black whiskers, black eyes, black eye-brows, and a black handkerchief round his neck, who had overheard all that had passed—"I'll bet you any money, Fitzurse, that it is Signor Musarcianciarelli."

"Yes, sir, yes, that's just it," cried the lackey.

"And who the devil is he?" exclaimed Mr. Fitzurse.

"Why, the man with the violet cream," replied his companion "that makes hair grow up in a couple of hours, like mustard and cress—very dangerous stuff, indeed. Did you not hear what happened to Lady Firebrand, the three-bottle woman? Why, going out one day last winter, the frost caught her nose; and before she got drunk that night, she told her maid to rub it well, after she was in bed, with chilblain ointment. The maid got drunk as well as her mistress, took Musarcianciarelli's violet cream, instead of the chilblain ointment; and, horror of horrors, next morning my lady's nose was a complete bottle-brush, and the maid had a large camel's hair pencil at the end of each of her fingers. Lady Firebrand sent immediately for the man that shaves noses; but the signor's violet cream beat him out of the field. The more he shaved, the more the hair grew; till at length, as a last resource, they determined to have it curled and pomatumed, and bring it in as a new fashion."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted the Viscount Outrun, from the end of the table, "very good, very good, indeed. Bring in the signor, Joseph, we'll give him a glass of wine, and make him rebeaver all our old hats."

"Stay, stay!" shouted his son, "this is some-trick, depend upon it. Shouldn't wonder if it were a bailiff. That fellow, Thomson, the saddler, swore he would have me. Tom Hamilton, there's a good fellow—do go and see. You ought to know a bailiff pretty well, I think."

"That I should," answered Tom Hamilton, the gentleman with the black hair aforesaid, "but it's after dark, Fitzurse; he can't make a caption after dark, you know."

"But it may be to serve me with some cursed process or another,"

rejoined the scion of the noble house of Outrun ; “ do go and see—there’s a good fellow. Fish out of him what he wants, and then come and tell me.”

“ If he’s a bailiff, we’ll horsepond him,” said the peer ; “ if he’s a mere bum, we’ll give him to the pump. Tripe—where’s Jeremy Tripe ?”

“ Here, my lord,” said a jolly stout butler, advancing from the sideboard.

“ Madeira !” said the viscount, pointing to an empty decanter, “ we’ll drink your health, Tom, while you’re gone.”

Tom Hamilton raised himself somewhat unwillingly from his chair, in which he had made himself very comfortable ; and following the footman, Joseph, he was led to the room in which the Chevalier de Lunatico had been left. There was something so very unbailiff-like in the whole appearance of the chevalier ; his legs were so much thinner, his stomach so much flatter, his eyes so much larger, and his teeth so much cleaner, than those of any bailiff in Europe, that Tom Hamilton at once saw that Mr. Fitzurse’s suspicions were wrong. He was not dressed well enough, either, for a dancing-master, or a quack doctor, or a musician. His hair went up in a frill on the top of his head too, so that he could not be an independent parson, a Baptist missionary, or a seller of tracts ; and though past the prime of life, there was a sort of sparkling, moonshiny air about him altogether, which puzzled Tom Hamilton amazingly. “ Pray, be seated, sir,” said Tom Hamilton.

“ Have I the honour of speaking to the Honourable Mr. Fitzurse ?” said the chevalier.

“ Not exactly, sir,” replied Tom, “ but his friend.”

“ Then, I suppose, sir,” rejoined the chevalier, “ Mr. Fitzurse divines the cause of my coming, and that you are here to arrange the preliminaries.”

“ Ho, ho !” said Tom Hamilton, “ an affair of honour, I perceive. If that’s the case, it makes a great difference. Pray, let us have the pleasure of your company at dinner, and we will discuss the matter over a glass of wine, when the servants are gone. Devilish good fellow, my friend Fitzurse,” he continued, under the influence of the open-heartedness which the chevalier’s presence always produced ; “ devilish good fellow, but a little bit of a blackguard too. There are such things as good blackguards, and bad blackguards, you know, Mr. What’s-your-name. Now, Fitzurse is a bad blackguard, I’m afraid. Why I keep company with him, I’m sure I don’t know. His father gives good dinners, that’s true. Capital shooting down here too, in the season, and some as good fishing, just now, as heart could desire. Ha ! are you a brother of the angle ? Bring the speckled fellows out of the stream, ha ? But come, let us finish our dinner, Mr. What’s-your-name.”

“ *My name* is the Chevalier de Lunatico,” replied our friend, “ and I dined before I came here. Nevertheless, I will take a glass of wine with you, if it be good, which I doubt not.—The party will excuse my boots and my riding-dress ”

"By all means, by all means," cried Tom Hamilton, hastily, "no ceremonies upon such occasions, chevalier; you are quite up to these sort of things, I see—seen a good many of them in your country, I dare say?"

"There are more of them amongst us than amongst any other people in the universe," said the chevalier, calmly: "but may I hint that we must not be long in making our arrangements; for I must return to the village, where I left my friend to get the pistols ready, and cast the bullets, and all that sort of thing."

"Let us finish our dinner," said Tom Hamilton; "pity your friend isn't here; we could have settled it after dinner over the table. A capital measure of distance, a good long dining-table."

"Yes," replied the chevalier, "before dinner, but not after it. People do not know rightly at what glass to stop, I have remarked; and the consequence is, the table suffers, but nobody else. Better in the cool of the morning, my dear sir. However, I follow you with pleasure; but we had better not speak of the matter at all, while the servants are in the room, lest it take wind; merely introduce me as the Chevalier de Lunatico; we can broach the subject afterwards."

This being arranged, Tom Hamilton led the way back to the dining-room, introducing the Chevalier de Lunatico. It was a large, wide, old-fashioned chamber, lined with dark oak, which reflected no ray of light. At one end, between two pillars, was the beaufet, covered with a sufficient array of plate; and down the middle was a table, which would have dined four-and-twenty people, with covers laid for three only; namely, the viscount, his son, and Tom Hamilton. There was plenty of light upon the table, near the end of which the party was congregated, and likewise on the sideboard, behind the master of the house. There was plenty of dinner also, arrayed in what the poet sublimely calls "a regular confusion," and plenty of wine, moreover, with very evident symptoms of a good deal having been already drunk. These particulars were gained at a single glance; but the eye of the chevalier rested with more deliberate inquiry upon the faces of the two gentlemen whom he found seated at the table; and the first countenance he scrutinized was that of the viscount. He was a tall, large man, of about sixty, with very black eyes, which perhaps might have been fine ones in their day. His face was very red, and very blotchy; and the eyes, the corners of the mouth, and the wings of the nose had manifold scarlet lines running about them, which spoke of potations deep and strong. His hair was whitish, his whiskers thin and poor, and his long eyebrows, as pure as snow, overhung the poppy garden of his countenance, like a pent-house thatch covered with snow. The two lower buttons of his waistcoat, and one in the waistband of his breeches, were undone, showing a part of his shirt, and easing the protuberance of his stomach; and at the moment the chevalier entered, he was carving some dish before him in a very slashing manner, scattering the sauce over the table-cloth, without any very great reverence for its purity. The son was not so tall as his father, and was altogether a very disagreeable looking personage. He was inclined to be fat, though not extremely so at that moment. His countenance was

white and pasty, with eyes much like a sheep in shape and expression, thick lips, a good deal of curly whey-coloured whisker, and white ill-regulated hair. There was an affectation of groomishness about his dress, which was carried to the pitch of having a leathern string to his watch; and there was an uneasy conceit in his countenance, which told that he thought not a little of himself, and was afraid of other people not thinking so much. At the same time, there was a shy averting of the eye when any one gazed at him stedfastly, superadding to the rest of his beauties a sharper-like look, which was all that was necessary to complete the perfections of his countenance. He was a large hipped man withal, though his legs were longish; and this peculiar formation put him into unpleasant attitudes, both when he sat and when he walked. Having been introduced to both father and son by Tom Hamilton, the chevalier shook hands with the peer, who held out a great broad paw to him for that purpose, and took a seat between him and the said Tom, facing the hopeful heir of Outrun Castle.

“What will you take, chevalier?” exclaimed the viscount. “First of all, a glass of wine with me—Hermitage? No—champagne?—Tripe, Jeremy Tripe, champagne to the chevalier.”

The butler reached the champagne from a cooler in the middle of the table, and over Mr. de Lunatico’s shoulder poured forth a glass of creaming wine. Something, Heaven knows what, caused our good friend to turn round his head, and fix his eyes upon the face of Jeremy Tripe, when he beheld in the very butler of the noble lord, the identical person who, three quarters of an hour before, had taken his money on the highway.

CHAPTER IV.

A CONVERSATION APART—THE PEER INDULGES SOME OF HIS PROPENSITIES—SOME BUSINESS DISCUSSED—MR. FITZURSE FINDS HIMSELF OUT OF SPIRITS—THE PEER HAS DOUBTS AS TO HIS SON’S SOBRIETY.

THE learned reader may conceive the astonishment of the Chevalier de Lunatico, on discovering the fact with which we just concluded the last chapter, though why we did conclude the last chapter there, we will leave to future ages to determine, as there is no apparent reason for it whatsoever, except that we might employ a spare note of admiration, and leave time for every one to stare. The worthy butler, however, to resume the thread of our discourse, seemed very much less affected by the meeting than the chevalier himself, and bending down his head as he poured out the wine, he whispered—“Don’t

say a word, and I'll tell you all about it by-and-by;" being moved to such an act of confidence by the chevalier's peculiar powers.

In the meanwhile the peer, and the peer's son, and Tom Hamilton together had all fixed their eyes upon the chevalier, and had remarked his look of amazement.

"Why, what the devil is he staring at Jerry Tripe for?" cried the peer.

"Do you see anything very peculiar in the butler, Master Musarsianciarelli?" asked the peer's son.

"He's afraid of being set on fire," said Tom Hamilton across the table in a low tone. "What between Tripe's nose close at his ear on one side, and your father's face on the other, he must be Chabert himself to stand it."

"There is a slight mistake," said the chevalier, addressing Mr. Fitzurse; "my name is not Musarsianciarelli, my name is Lunatico, at your service. May I inquire who the gentleman is that rejoices in the epithet which we all pronounce with such difficulty?"

"He's an improvisatore," said Tom Hamilton, laughing; "produces poetical whiskers upon any given cheek, and extemporises a wig in five minutes!"

"Come, come," cried the peer, "this is all loss of time. Get some soup for the chevalier, and a hot plate; give me the mint sauce, and a slice out of that lamb. We'll teach you good feeding in England, chevalier, ay, and good deep drinking too. Taste that Madeira, taste that Madeira!—Sherry? What's sherry worth, in comparison with good Madeira? Why, that wine had been twice to the East Indies when I got it; but not satisfied with that, I sent it round Cape Horn. A Spanish Don in the new world offered its weight in dollars for every pipe of it, but I wouldn't part with a bottle, and there it is;—taste it, taste it."

"A fine string of them!" said Mr. Fitzurse, in a whisper to Tom Hamilton, and the latter bringing his mouth nearer to the ear of Mr. de Lunatico, informed him that his friend the peer had a certain propensity to what the great poet calls "*a lie with a circumstance!*"

"I see, I see," replied the chevalier; "that is very apparent. Nevertheless, the Madeira is very good, the lie, if one could believe it, would not make it any the better."

The chevalier persisted in his determination not to eat any thing, and drank a great deal less than the peer thought proper, but his lordship made up for all deficiencies, and, to say truth, neither Tom Hamilton nor the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse were at all backward upon the occasion. Tom, indeed, looked at his friend from time to time with certain sort of misgivings as to his encountering a friend with a pistol in his hand as resolutely as he did one with a decanter, and in order that he might show as little white featherism as possible in the preliminaries, he plied him with wine during dinner, whispering to the chevalier, in a confidential manner—"I believe he's a d—d coward at heart.—I have heard something of the kind, but we must bring him to the scratch anyhow."

"That depends upon yourselves," replied the chevalier drily; "and

besides, it is an old proverb in my country, that you may bring a horse to the water, but cannot make him drink, and I suppose it is the same with what you call the scratch?"

"Not exactly, not exactly," answered Tom Hamilton. "Once get a man there, and he's sure to fire one way or another. There is a sort of inevitable twitching about the forefinger which always pulls the trigger sooner or later: sometimes too soon indeed, for I knew a fellow, who in a great fright shot himself through the broad of his foot, brought on lockjaw and died, all from fear of being shot by another man—But, thank Heaven, that cursed butler is taking away. We shall soon have the claret and the anchovies, and then we can settle the preliminaries over the bottle."

"But the young gentleman's father," said Mr. de Lunatico. "According to the most approved practice in my country, when one gentleman has an inclination to kill another in what is called an honourable manner, two friends are selected, one on either side, who are, of course, the two persons in all the universe most likely to promote bloodshed, and the greatest care is taken to keep the matter a secret from every one who either out of regard for one or other of the parties, from respect for the law, or from possessing a few grains of common sense, is likely to sooth angry spirits and reconcile the adversaries. I think decidedly that we should get the peer out of the way."

"Not at all, not at all," said Tom Hamilton. "He's our trump-card, man! Without him Fitzurse would never fight. They have divided a certain portion of courage between them; but they did it by lot, I think, and all that was serviceable fell to the father."

"What the devil are those two fellows whispering about?" inquired the peer, who for the last moment or two had been dividing between his son and the butler some important conversation regarding magnums of claret and bottles of tokay, and had just ended the discussion by saying—"Bring a bottle of the port ninety-one! Give the old boy an anchovy, Tripe."

The butler accordingly performed his office, and the chevalier swallowed a portion of the fish, which he declared to be very salt and rather unpleasant.

"But it is for the *Wy-en*," drawled the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus. "You could never drink your wy-en without an anchovy, Signor Sublimatico,—at least not so well!"

"Then it is for the purpose of creating an appetite before you gratify it," said the chevalier, "that you eat these animals."

Mr. Fitzurse replied—"To be sure we do—very natural too. Did not the Romans take a vomit, that they might be able to eat two dinners? For my part, if I thought that anchovies would make me relish another bottle, I'd eat a whole keg!"

By this time the little fishes had been handed round, the wine placed upon the table, and the butler, after certain ceremonies appertaining to his place, withdrew and left the party alone. Tom Hamilton touched the arm of the chevalier, the latter drew forth Worrel's letter, and stretching across the table, handed it to the son of the peer.

"Why, what the devil's this?" cried Mr. Fitzurse. "Is it a begging letter?"

"Or the prospectus of some grand discovery?" said the peer, laughing.

"Or a subscription-list for building a church?" demanded the son.

"Or an invitation to join the society for the suppression of vice?" shouted the peer, roaring with merriment.

"Is it from Wilberforce, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, or Martin of Galway?" demanded the son.

"Or Lord Brougham, or Macauley, or Cox Savory, or Van Butchel?" cried the peer.

"No," answered the Chevalier de Lunatico, with a placid smile and a courteous inclination of the head; "it is from a young friend of mine, named Harry Worrel; to request that the Honourable Mr. Fitzurse will appoint any place of meeting to-morrow, at half-past five, for the purpose of settling certain differences between them—it being Mr. Worrel's determination, not to quit the ground alive, unless those differences are settled."

"A challenge, by jingo," cried the peer, laughing more heartily than ever. "Well, Freddy, my boy, we'll have a blaze at him."

But the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse did not seem to view the matter in the same light as his father. He turned very white in the gills, bluish about the lips; his eyes got fish-like and glassy, and Tom Hamilton started up, exclaiming, "He's fainted to a dead certainty."

"Fainted!" cried the peer. "No, by——! he's drunk—that's what he is—I'll soon sober him," and pouring out a tumbler-full of water, he dashed the whole unceremoniously in his son's face. The first application not succeeding, he repeated it, exclaiming, "Fred, you're drunk, d—— me, you're drunk, and here you've got to fight a duel to-morrow morning!—Well, it does not signify, Mr. Prismatico, or whatever your cursed absurd name may be. Be so good as to present my compliments to your friend, Mr. Harry Worrel, and tell him, that my son will have the honour of meeting him in the narrow lane, that runs under the park-wall, to-morrow morning. He will know the place well—we will have it half-way between the park-gates and the village, that whoever comes down, may not have far to go. He shall meet him; and d—— me, if he doesn't, I'll meet him myself!"

"You will excuse me, my lord," said the Chevalier de Lunatico, "but I do not think that would exactly answer the purpose; I never heard of such a thing being done by deputy: and in the present instance, as the quarrel is about a lady, it would be quite inadmissible. If your son does not appear upon the ground himself, I must withdraw my party."

"Oh, he shall come, sir, he shall come," cried the peer. "You don't suppose he's afraid. He's drunk, sir; I tell you, he's only drunk. Why, sir, we had drunk three bottles of champagne before you came in. I understand all about it—half-past five o'clock—the lane under the park-wall—half-way between the gates and the village. His father shot me just there, and I do not see why my son should not shoot him. He's a good shot, always was a good shot—hey, Tom Hamilton!"

"Devilish good, my lord," cried Tom Hamilton, "with a gun; don't know his pistol capacities, but dare say he'll do. Come, chevalier, this business settled, I'll just say a word or two to you in the next room, and then we won't detain you."

The chevalier accordingly made his bow and retired, accompanied by Tom Hamilton, who, as soon as the door was closed, shrugged his shoulders, saying,

"A pretty job this, to be sure!"

"Why, your friend brought it upon himself," said the chevalier; "he wrote a very impertinent letter this morning."

"Well, the thing's done, and can't be helped," cried Tom Hamilton. "The old gentleman will bring him to the ground—that's clear; I suppose we must cork him up with brandy. I say, chevalier, d—me, tell your friend not to kill him—wing him, man, wing him—sad thing for me, if he were killed. He's a devilish good fellow, though an infernal blackguard, I must own; but there's capital shooting down here, in the season, and the fishing's excellent."

CHAPTER V.

JERRY TRIPE DISPLAYS HIS PRINCIPLES—AN INQUIRY INTO FROLICS—JOEY PIKE MEETS WITH PROMOTION—AN EARLY WALK THAT IS NOT GOOD FOR DIGESTION—THE PRINCIPAL, THE SECOND, AND THE BOTTLE-HOLDER.

WHILE one of the servants went round to the stables, to bring up the cantering Galloway, and the Chevalier de Lunatico stood upon the steps of the house, enjoying the beams of his own sweet planet as much as any of the Chloes of Mr. Moore's lyrics, he was joined by no less a person than Jerry Tripe himself, who approached with a courteous salutation of "No offence, I hope, sir; but I cannot be mistaken in supposing you the gentleman with whom I exchanged a few words in the lane, an hour or two ago."

"If I had had a pistol," replied Mr. de Lunatico, "we should have exchanged shots, Signor Tripe!"

"No, that we shouldn't, sir," replied the butler; "for whatever you might have given me out of your pistol, there was nothing in mine to return!"

"Very singular!" said the chevalier. "I should think you well deserved a ticket for St. Luke's, my good friend, if you really mean to say, that when you incurred all the risk of such an exploit, you left yourself without the means of defence, when it could not cost you the twentieth part of a farthing to buy a bullet for your pistol. Why, sir, you must be a lunatic!"

"Not at all, sir, not at all," replied the butler. "You call it an *exploit*—I say, it is but a *frolic*; and if I should be caught, the frolic is proved by my having no shot in my pistol. I have a friend, and a fellow-servant in the family here, who is ready to swear any thing I like, and will prove any night in the week, that I have a bet with him, to take a purse in the lane, all for the sake of a *frolic*!"

"There must be very strange law in your country," said the chevalier, "if they tolerate such frolics as that, Master Tripe."

"That may be, sir," answered the butler; "but I can tell you, they tolerate frolics ten times worse every day. It matters little to you if you lose a pound or two—but many a woman has been frightened to death; many a poor girl ruined, body and soul; many an honest man lost his life, all for the sake of an honourable gentleman's frolic!"

"And pray, how does the law deal with such frolics and personages?" asked Mr. de Lunatico.

"Fines them five shillings," replied the butler, "and discharges them, with a warning not to do so any more."

"You are a very lenient people," said the Chevalier de Lunatico.

"Very," said the butler, "*to vice in high station*. But here comes your honour's horse; so I won't detain you any longer, but will wish you a pleasant ride, and may you meet with no fresh solicitor upon the king's high-way."

The Chevalier de Lunatico, perfectly satisfied with this explanation, mounted his steed and rode away; and as we will not trouble the reader with any more of the picturesque, we will land him at once at the door of the Half Moon, in the little village of Outrun, where he was received by Joey Pike, in the attitude of the Apollo Belvidere; only, that instead of a bow, which the Delphic god is supposed to have been armed with, the renowned Joey held in his right hand a lantern.

"Here, here! ostler, ostler!" he cried, "presto, presto, take the gentleman's cheval. Allow me, monsignore, to conduct you into the camera, where Signor Worrel is waiting for you;" and he accordingly led the chevalier forward with his usual tiptoe step, finding a way peculiarly his own of opening the parlour-door, and beaming upon the chevalier, as he passed, a smile of ineffable sweetness and self-satisfaction. At the same time he asked, "Is there any thing farther for your service, sir; I shall be delighted to accomplish your *volonty*."

Having said this as a mere matter of courtesy, Joey was about to retire, with his right hand thrust into the bosom of his velvet waistcoat, when the chevalier stopped him saying—

"Stop a moment, Master Pike; I think you are in search of a place. Is it not so? and you are only upon the books of the landlady here as a sort of supernumerary."

"A *punto*, a *punto*, signor, I mean to say, *precisement*," replied Joey Pike. "I am here, sir, as it were, in an intermediate state; in fact, what my friend the famous naturalist, Mr. Winken de Worde, used to call a *pupa*; that is to say, something between a caterpillar and a butterfly."

seen approaching a party consisting of the three following personages—The Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse, with steps that did not seem the most steady in the world, and with a white emetic-looking face, appeared between the other two; on one side of him was Tom Hamilton, supporting him under the arm with his left hand, and carrying a case of pistols with the other, while on the left of the peer's son, appeared a no less important personage than Jerry Tripe, loaded with his own particular arms, in the shape of two large green glass bottles. A wine-glass peeped from a pocket of the waistcoat which covered his capacious stomach, and with his right shoulder he ever and anon nudged on his honourable young master. As soon as they came in sight of the opposite party, which was at the distance of about three hundred yards, they stopped, bringing their three heads together in the form of a triangle, and Worrel and the chevalier could perceive that the glass was withdrawn from the butler's pocket, and having been filled with part of the contents of one of the bottles, was handed to the principal personage concerned, who drank off the contents, and held it out for another. This operation seemed to restore him some degree of energy, for he advanced more briskly than before, and the two parties were soon within a short distance of each other.

"Good morning, Mr. Fitzurse, good morning, Mr. Hamilton," said the chevalier with his usual courtesy.

"Devilish cold," said Mr. Fitzurse with a hiccup, "ain't it, Worrel? Take a drop of summut short. Here, Tripe, pour him out some lush."

"Hush, sir, hush," said Tripe, almost singeing the honourable gentleman's whiskers, by bringing his nose close to his ear. "You forget, sir, you are to be sober—quite sober. You've got to fight, you know."

"Fight, fight!" said Mr. Fitzurse, turning a very blank look upon his counsellor, and then a sharper one at Worrel, and seeming gradually to awake to a consciousness of his situation. "Fight, fight! Ay, so I have, upon my honour;" and the conviction seemed to him any thing but a pleasant one, for his teeth began to chatter, and his knees to shake most desperately. In the meanwhile Worrell stood at some distance, close to his own pistol-case, and Tom Hamilton and the chevalier had retired a step or two towards the side of the park, to consult in regard of their proceedings, when suddenly a head was popped up over the wall, covered with a large crimson velvet night-cap, which looked dim compared to the face beneath it, and the voice of the viscount exclaimed, "Now, Freddy, my boy, d——n me, have at him!"

"My lord, my lord," cried Tom Hamilton, in a tone of serious remonstrance, "you promised me you would not——"

But before the first word was well out of his mouth, the viscount's head had disappeared, and the chevalier and Mr. Hamilton proceeded with their arrangements.

"I am afraid, sir," said Mr. de Lunatico, "that your friend is not in a very fit state to fight."

"It is the only state that he ever will fight in," said Tom Hamilton decidedly; "it is not my doing, however, it was the peer and the butler settled it between them. However, it is no business of ours, we are here for a specific purpose, and I think we had better measure the ground."



The Deal

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. This not only helps in tracking expenses but also ensures compliance with tax regulations.

In the second section, the author provides a detailed breakdown of the monthly budget. It includes categories for housing, utilities, food, and entertainment. Each category is further divided into specific items, such as rent, electricity, groceries, and dining out. This level of detail allows for a clear understanding of where the money is being spent.

The third section focuses on the analysis of the budget. It compares the actual spending against the planned budget for each category. This comparison helps in identifying areas where spending has exceeded the budget and where it has remained within or below the plan.

Finally, the document concludes with a summary of the overall financial performance. It highlights the total amount spent and compares it to the total budget. The author notes that while there were some areas of overspending, the overall budget was managed reasonably well.

The chevalier bowed, and twelve small paces were accordingly measured out. The pistols were crammed, and some little conversation was taking place with regard to the time and method of firing, when suddenly the red night-cap and the redder face appeared once more above the wall, exclaiming, "D——me, what are you all about? Do you mean to be all day?" and as soon as the words were pronounced, the vision disappeared again.

"Very irregular this, sir," said Mr. de Lunatico.

"Very," said Tom Hamilton, "but it can't be helped; the peer will have his own way, and——"

"There is excellent fishing and shooting down here!" said the chevalier.

"Capital," replied Tom Hamilton, "and to tell you the truth that's the reason I stand more than I otherwise would. But what is one to do now with this drunken cowardly beast?" he continued, looking significantly toward the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus; "what between brandy and fear, if I take away the butler, who, you see, is holding him up with his shoulder, he will be down to a certainty."

"You would not like to go the butler too, I suppose?" said the chevalier.

"Why, I should personally have no objection," said Tom Hamilton, "though *he* might. But really we must go to business some way."

"I think you will find your friend quite sober now," said the chevalier, "fear and drunkenness can't live in the same house together—the one kills the other. But, as you say, it is time to begin, or we shall have the red night-cap up again. I will place my man, and you must do the best you can."

Thus saying, he moved away to the spot where Worrel had stood during that expectant five minutes which is, perhaps, the most unpleasant period of any man's whole life. The pistol was soon placed in his hand, and the chevalier, with a word or two of scientific direction, left him, and took his stand near the bushes, where Joey Pike had remained striding over the pistol-case in the attitude of an Agamemnon.

Tom Hamilton's task was not quite so soon completed, and it was very evident to the Chevalier, Worrell, and all the other parties concerned, that the Honourable Mr. Fitzurse was shaking in the most undignified manner possible. At length, however, the butler crept away with his bottles to the place appointed for the seconds, and Tom Hamilton keeping his friend somewhat upon the perpendicular, shouted to Mr. de Lunatico, "You must give the word, chevalier, by ——, I can't leave him, so I must make him cover my angles the best way I can."

But just at that moment up popped the red night-cap and face again, and the voice of the peer shouted forth, "D——me, stand up, sir, like a man! Get away, Tom Hamilton! Stand up, sir, or I'll come over and cane you!"

A momentary energy was given to Mr. Fitzurse by the voice of his respected parent, his knees became straighter, his back less bent. Tom Hamilton took advantage of the opportunity, and darted away; the chevalier gave the word, and strange to say both pistols went off at once. The ball of Mr. Fitzurse making an angle of ninety degrees

from the line which it ought to have pursued towards his adversary, passed between Tom Hamilton and the chevalier, and left an invaluable scar upon the cheek of Joey Pike, who sent forth in a melo-dramatic tone, "Je suis blessé!" But alack and a-well-a-day, no sooner had the honourable scion of a noble house performed this chivalrous feat, than down he fell at full length upon his face without sense or motion.

"He's fainted again, by jingo," cried Tom Hamilton.

"D—— me, he's down," cried a voice from under the red night-cap.

"He falls very like a dead man," said the chevalier, and the two seconds, with Joey Pike and Jerry Tripe, ran up to the spot, while Worrel stood where he had been placed with not the most pleasant feelings in the world, and the peer was seen struggling to raise the squelchy rotundity of his abdomen over the wall, though he was unable to effect it.

Tom Hamilton and Mr. Tripe were the first at the spot, and they soon contrived to roll Mr. Fitzurse over upon his back. His face was as pale as ashes, and just in the middle of his forehead was a small wound, from which the blood was trickling down between his eyebrows, and into his right eye.

"Get up the pistols, Joey," said the chevalier, "it is time to be off."

"D—— me, he's dead," cried the peer from the top of the wall, "run for a constable, Jerry Tripe—raise the hue-and-cry—send down the people from the lodge."

"Oh, if that's the case, there is no time to be lost," said the chevalier.

"Come, Worrel, come, or our pigeon-shooting may have a bad end."

Thus saying he took Worrel by the arm, and followed by Joey Pike with the pistols, he made the best of his way down the lane.

CHAPTER VI.

A MISTAKEN PURSUIT—THE ENDS AND OBJECTS OF FOX-HUNTING—THE LOVER'S RETURN.

THE Chevalier de Lunatico, Harry Worrel, and Joey Pike proceeded down the lane, as we have said, at first with a dignified slowness, as if they would not stoop to run away, but they gradually accelerated their steps till at length Joey pulled the skirt of the chevalier's coat, and crying "Ecoutez!" threw himself into the attitude of the listening slave. The whole party stopped for a moment and listened, upon which a loud hullabaloo was heard coming quickly up the road behind them.

"We had better separate," said Worrel. "Joey, take care of yourself, hide away the pistols somewhere shrewdly, and let us all meet to-night

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in Mr. Longmore's garden. I will take across the country. Chevalier, you come up the bank here with me, and I will show you a place of concealment."

"No, no," replied the chevalier laughing, "take care of yourself, my good friend. If I understood you rightly last night, all they will do is to put me in prison, and I should not much mind a fair insight into such an establishment. I will join you to-night if I am not taken."

"Good by, good by, then," cried Worrel, scrambling up the bank, and disappearing amongst the bushes on the other side.

The chevalier turned round to look for his newly acquired valet, but Joey had given up the display of grace in repose, for the purpose of exhibiting grace in action; and such use had he made of the locomotive machinery with which nature had provided him, that all the chevalier could perceive of his dear departed friend was a pair of legs going rapidly round a turn in the lane, about a hundred yards in advance. Being thus left to his own resources, Mr. de Lunatico walked deliberately forward, determined to take his chance of what might occur, and to leave to our good friend, Fate, the task of settling his lodging for the night. The sounds that followed were now increasing in intensity every minute; but Mr. de Lunatico presently thought that he heard the tongues of dogs as well as men joining in the outcry; and in a moment or two after, down from the top of the bank shot a large male fox, which darted on along the road, and ensconced itself quietly in a large hole under the hedge near the spot where Joey Pike had disappeared. Scarcely had reynard thus entrenched himself, when a number of black and white ill-looking dogs, with hanging ears and open mouths, poured down from above, some tumbling head over heels in their eagerness, some treading the precipitous descent as delicately as if they had been taught to dance the tight-rope. The chevalier paused, doubting much whether he was not about to be eaten up alive. But the hounds, smelling something that they liked better, rushed forward full cry upon the track of their long-backed prey. A more real danger, however, threatened the chevalier the moment after, for scarcely had the hounds chosen their own course when a gentleman in a red coat, mounted on a splendid black horse, appeared suddenly on the top of the bank, made a violent effort to pull in his beast, and came down head over heels into the lane below. He was just jumping up when a second appeared above, and, without being warned by his companion's fate, dashed on to the very edge, where the earth giving way, the horse slipped, rolled over, jammed its rider between its body and the earth, and striking full against the stump of an old tree as it descended, broke its back, and lay kicking convulsively upon the ground. Another followed, but with more skill, though not with less rashness, he leaped his horse over a small bush, threw himself back with an easy rein, then gave him a lift of the head as they came down, and hunter and huntsman descended safely on the turf at the bottom of the bank; the only little accident that occurred being that the horse kicked one of the gentlemen who had fallen as he descended, and broke his leg. At the same moment a number of similar scenes were going on in various parts of the lane; and with not much care

for the killed or wounded, the red-coated gentry rode on after the hounds, till a loud cry of "gone to earth, gone to earth," and "dig him out, dig him out," brought their sport for a time to a conclusion.

The chevalier put his hand in his breeches-pocket, and advanced quietly into the midst of the group which had by this time assembled around the hole to which reynard had betaken himself. He bowed courteously to the different gentlemen he passed, and was greeted universally with a benignant smile, which certainly no native of this lower sphere would have received from the sportsmen at that moment.

"I beg your pardon," he said to one of the most prominent of the huntsmen, "but I am a stranger, and you will permit me to ask, what is all this about?"

"About?" replied the other, "why, it is a fox-hunt, man."

"And do you mean to say," asked the chevalier, "that all these men, and these horses, and all these dogs, have been running after the little beast I saw go into that hole?"

"To be sure," answered his companion. "It is the most glorious sport in the world."

"And are such accidents as these of frequent occurrence?" demanded the chevalier.

"Oh, continually," replied the other, "seldom a day passes without something of the kind. I myself have twice broken my collar-bone, once my arm, once my leg, and have been once trepanned."

"And do you really pretend to say you like it?" said the chevalier.

"Why, as to liking it, you know," replied the other, "one gets accustomed to it; it is very exciting you know, and all that."

"What a nice thing a fox must be," said the chevalier. "I should like to eat a bit very much."

"Eat a bit of a fox!" cried the huntsman, "the nasty stinking carrion. Why, man, you are mad!"

"I beg your pardon," said the chevalier, with a low bow, "I think it is you. However, I am much obliged to you for your politeness, and shall be very happy to see you all in my country when you come there, which you will be obliged to do within six months, according to the tenor of these presents;" and taking out a whole handful of billets he distributed them amongst the members of the hunt, much to their surprise.

The chevalier then made his bow and retired, leaving them to unearth the fox at their leisure; and taking his way quietly onward towards the village, determined to wait in peace the consequences of the late duel. Whether it was, however, that the pursuers, if there were any, never dreamt that the fugitives, like a hunted hare, would double back to their old form, or whether they were misled by a false scent, or whether there were any pursuers or not, the reader will soon be informed; but one thing is very certain, that they never thought of coming after the chevalier to the inn, and that he sat down about an hour afterwards to an excellent breakfast, and declared that he felt himself as much at home in the Half Moon as if he had been in the whole one.

"I don't know how it is either, Mrs. Muggins," he said, "for of all the people I have yet met with in this country, you are the least of a lunatic."

"La, sir," said Mrs. Muggins, "I'm glad you think so;" and having nothing more to say upon the occasion, she dropped a courtesy, and left the room. In ten minutes after, however, she returned to the parlour to tell the chevalier that the Hon. Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse had been shot in a duel, this being the first intimation of the affair which had reached the village. The chevalier replied, "really!" and finished his roll, and Mrs. Muggins, thinking him a very odd gentleman, again retired.

In the meanwhile, Harry Worrel made his way across the country, fell in with the fox-hounds, and began to suspect that the outcry which conscience had changed into the sounds of pursuit, was neither more nor less than the halloo of the huntsman. It might, indeed, have surprised him, in any other part of the country, to see the hounds out at so early an hour in the morning; but he was well aware of the peculiar habits of the master of the pack, who began the chace at six, rode like a madman till two, then came in to throw off his red coat, pull off his boots, and transact the business of the day as a magistrate, a father, and a landlord, with the most sedate and reasonable propriety. Taking his course across fields and through lanes well known to himself, Worrel approached by degrees the house of Mr. Longmore; and although he had determined stoutly not to present himself there till day was over, he continued moving about nearer and more near, like a moth flying round a candle, till at length, arguing that it would be cruel to leave his fair Laura in any doubt as to his fate, he opened the little gate of the garden, walked round to the window of the drawing-room—knowing very well, be it remembered, that Mr. Longmore was by this time in his observatory—and took the pleasure of observing her for a moment or two as she sat with her pretty little head leaning upon her pretty little hand, in a very pensive and melancholy attitude. It was one of those convenient windows, dear reader, which open down the middle, like a pair of folding doors. It had a brass handle, too, upon which Harry Worrel laid his hand gently—but not so gently that Laura did not hear it. The sound caused her to start up at once, and before Worrel had opened the window she was half-way towards it. There was nobody in the room but herself and her lover. She had not slept a wink all night, from a strong suspicion of the errand that Worrel was gone upon. She was in the act of fancying him shot, when his coming disturbed her reverie, and consequently, there being only one method of consoling herself for all she had suffered on his account, she took it at once, like a good girl as she was, threw herself into his arms and kissed his cheek, while tears of joy and relief ran over from her eyes. Under such circumstances people in general love to be left alone together, and we shall gratify them in this respect, as we are precluded by the dignity of our history from following the course of any personage further than just sufficient to elucidate its bearings upon the peculiar inquiries of the Chevalier de

Lunatico. There is, however, another personage whose proceedings we must take some notice of, as, without entering upon them fully, various parts of the subsequent adventures of the chevalier could not be clearly understood by the reader, who, perhaps, may not be sorry to hear something more concerning the fate of the renowned Joey Pike.

CHAPTER VII.

A NEW HISTORY OF AN OLD PARISH CLERK—SCENES OF DOMESTIC FELICITY—
SOME PLEASANT CONVERSATION, ENDING WITH THE LAST ACT OF MOST TRAGEDIES
—JOEY PIKE FINDS A FRIEND WANTING IN SPIRIT.

THE clerk of the parish—although this chapter is to be devoted to Joey Pike, and Joey was not installed in the honourable office we have just mentioned—the clerk of the parish, in the honour and manor of Outrun, fulfilled, in those days of primeval simplicity, the duties of sexton, and took upon himself the greater share of burying the dead. There is something, we have every reason to believe, in the smell of freshly turned earth, which has a great tendency to promote longevity: for, from the time of the exhumers of Yorick, downwards, it would appear that all grave-diggers live to a good old age. Such, at least, was the case with the clerk and sexton of the parish of Outrun, who had arrived at the respectable term of seventy years; and, though somewhat thin and weazened withal, he had remained a jovial old gentleman up to the period of three months before the time we speak of. In his early life he had married a wife, in mature life he had buried her; and for some years it was supposed that experience had led him to judge the latter to be the more satisfactory step of the two. But somewhat before he had reached what has been considered the grand terminus upon the railroad of life, beyond which few pass, and of which many stop short—a few months before he had reached the period of seventy years, the tender passion had resumed its sway, and Tobias Scapulary had once more committed matrimony with a lady some five-and-twenty years his junior, who had lately appeared in the parish of Outrun, and of whose family, connections, and conduct, there were sundry evil rumours in the village. However, as she had come down for the purpose of setting up a chandler's shop, in opposition to an old inhabitant of the place, scandal might have some share in the business, and the reports were to be taken with a grain of salt, as the Romans have it: although all the salt in the world would not have persuaded the rival chandler that the good lady was any thing but a

bad, saucy, drunken Irish woman, or that she was a real widow after all.

Notwithstanding all this, to her Tobias Scapulary paid his addresses. His friends and relations, as he was well to do in the world, remonstrated strongly. As a natural consequence, Tobias instantly laid his hand and heart at the feet of the widow, and she took a day to consider of the matter, which both increased his flame, and gave him a high idea of her prudence. In the mean time, she consulted with a friend of about five-and-fifty years of age, a native of the village, but one who had been a tin-man in London—had failed for a considerable amount with as much eclat as his betters—had paid three pence in the pound, and had come down to settle at Outrun, with, what he called, a comfortable little independence; that is to say, enough to purchase a pork-chop, when such things are in season, and a glass of gin and water at all periods of the year. "To make his crown a pound," he did not, like a certain Jemmy that the reader wots of, go to sea; but he had recourse, it was whispered, to various means, suggested by a fertile imagination. He sold rabbits about the neighbourhood, though where they came from was a mystery; and it was said, that a hare or a pheasant occasionally popped out of his bag, for the benefit of secret people who required such commodities. He also indulged in games of chuck-furthing, pitch-and-toss, and odds-and-evens; went as far as a touch at hazard, when he could get hold of the dice; and somehow or another he contrived to win more of other people's money, than he ever had to pay of his own. Moreover, he was a keen-looking, ugly wight, stout about the calves of the legs, but with a face as warty and knotty as the trunk of an old oak, and with a pair of small eyes, that might have fitted any pig's countenance in Christendom.

When the widow asked this worthy, whose name, by the way, was Smalldram, whether he thought it would be better for her to marry old Toby Scapulary or not, he took full five minutes to consider the question, and then replied deliberately, that it could do no great harm. Her answer then to the clerk's proposal was satisfactory to his feelings, and at the end of a fortnight and two days the lady and gentleman were made one flesh.

From that time forth, however, a sad change took place in good Tobias Scapulary. He wasted away, he grew feeble, his spade no longer played gaily amongst the bones of his departed friends; neither his own life nor the death of others, seemed to afford him that amusement and satisfaction which he had known therein in former years; and it was whispered all over the village, that he had found the second dose of matrimony worse than the first. At length he had taken to his bed, but the village doctor said there was no immediate danger, that he might go on for months in his present state, and perhaps get well again. The lawyer gave a hint to his relations, that on his marriage-day he had made a will, leaving his whole substance to his present wife. The relations thought that his views in those matters might be changed, and urged him to make another testament, which he said he would do, but put it off from day to day; and, in the meantime, Mrs. Scapulary devoted herself to attendance upon his sick-bed, with the

pleasing hope of frustrating the interested views of his kith and kin. No solace, no recreation did she know, but a couple of hours' gossip in the parlour adjoining his bed-room with her excellent friend Smalldram, together with a glass or two of stiff gin and water, in which he shared. Such was the state of things on the day preceding the duel which we have recorded in the last chapter; and although all this seems to have nothing to do with Joey Pike, yet it will soon be found, that he was not slightly connected therewith.

At the very time, then, that Harry Worrel was sitting within the hospitable doors of the Half Moon, and talking to Mrs. Muggins in regard to his father, his mother, his uncle, and the rest; at that very moment too, when the Chevalier de Lunatico was speeding along upon the cantering galloway down the lane, towards Outrun castle, or undergoing the unpleasant interrogatory of Mr. Jeremy Tripe; at the very moment that Lord Outrun, Tom Hamilton, and the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse were in the incipient dinner-state of fish and soup, Mrs. Scapulary was coming and going between the bed-room of her husband and the cottage-parlour which fronted the street; looking with a sweet face of assumed sensibility upon the sick man, when in one chamber, and putting on the aspect of a devil incarnate when she issued forth into the other. The beautiful contrast of demeanour produced by the two apartments, was not confined to mute signs alone; for in the bed-room she would exclaim, in a gentle though audible voice, "Do take a little gin and water, Toby, my dear, it will do you good: there's a dear old man." But in the parlour she muttered in a low tone, "The nasty old varmint—a rat's a nosegay to him."

There was evidently something, to use a common term, upon Mrs. Scapulary's mind; for she put her eye more than once to one of the small panes of the cottage-window, and looked out into the moonlight street of the little village, as if anxious to know what was taking place. In so doing she squeezed her nose, which was reddish about the wings, almost flat against the glass; which fact is mentioned here, merely to show the eagerness that she displayed. At length, however, a tap was heard at the window, upon which she opened the door, and in walked the person of her friend Mr. Smalldram.

"The old brute's asleep," said Mrs. Scapulary, "but it won't last long; he always wakes about half-past eleven, and lies whining and whimpering for an hour."

"But how are you yourself, my dear creetur?" said Mr. Smalldram. "Worn out with anxiety, I dare say," and at the same time he squeezed her hand tenderly.

What Mrs. Scapulary replied to this courteous inquiry, it is not needful to repeat; but, however that may be, she and her good friend sat down by the side of the round table; a great glass bottle was set upon it, with two rummers and a sugar-basin. A tea-kettle, which was singing on the fire, made more than one excursion between the grate and the table during the hour that succeeded, and an interesting conversation took place, the most important point in which was, that Mr. Smalldram informed Mrs. Scapulary that the new will

was drawn out by the lawyer, that it was to be signed at twelve the next day, and that if she did not mind what she was about, she would be *done*.

This intimation threw the lady into a thoughtful mood, and Mr. Small dram followed up his hit by saying that if he were her he would take care and stop *that go*. The mature consideration of these matters was prevented for the time by the waking up of the worthy Tobias, who began with a cough and went on with a growl, and thus continued, alternately coughing, growling, and scolding, from half-past eleven till the hour of two, when having insisted upon his wife coming to bed, he fell into a sound sleep.

Now it happened that Mrs. Scapulary had forgotten, on retiring to rest, to tell Mr. Small dram that it would be better for him to take his departure, and he consequently remained in the parlour, fraternizing with the green glass bottle. As soon, however, as the worthy clerk was asleep, his fair lady returned to the companionship which she affected more, and after having comforted herself with a warm glass, she made an observation or two upon her husband's high qualities—declared that it was time he was gone—added a philosophical remark or two upon the sorrows and cares of mortal existence, especially in a man turned seventy, and then put a question of a delicate nature to her worthy counsellor, who replied as before,

“No great harm, I should think.”

“Nor I either,” said the dame.

“Does he sleep sound?” said Mr. Small dram.

“When he is asleep,” replied the lady; “but you'll make him sleep sound enough, Tommy, if you have your way.”

“Ay, ay, a wonderful narcotic that, as the doctor calls it,” said the worthy counsellor; and both Mrs. Scapulary and Mr. Small dram chuckled low at the joke, and thought it a good one.

“But how is it to be done?” demanded Mrs. Scapulary.

“Ay, that is the question,” rejoined Mr. Small dram.

“Couldn't I get some stuff for the rats and make a mistake?” said Mrs. Scapulary. “Sitch accidents will happen.”

“The worst of it is,” replied her counsellor, “that we are hard up for time. The will is to be signed to-morrow morning; and besides arsenic is so easy found out. Those d—d doctors will never let any one poison people but themselves.

“I hate doctors,” rejoined the clerk's wife abstractedly; “they shall never none of them come near me.”

“I don't dislike the doctors,” said Mr. Small dram, with a wink of his left eye, which in its pristine state was considerably smaller than the other; “but I like to have them in my own hand. But let us think how we can do the old chap. One could get a pillow and hold it down over his mouth, you a one side and I of t'other! He can't have much wind left.”

Mrs. Scapulary laughed, and Mr. Small dram went on to say—“It's classical too, my dear, that's the way that Othello got rid of his better half.”

“Ay,” said the clerk's wife; “but this old fellow's devilish strong

with always a shovelling up of the earth, and if he were once to get his head out and screech, then we are done for, you know."

"Haven't you got a rope anywhere?" said the *ci-devant* tin-man. "I've little or no doubt he deserves to be hanged long ago!"

"Why there are the ropes he lets down the corpses with," said Mrs. Scapulary; "he keeps them just under the bed."

"I dare say," rejoined Mr. Small dram, "that you could just slip one end of it under his neck without waking him."

"I dare say I could," replied the lady; "and if he did wake for a minute he'd know nothing about it. I can slip it under the pillow."

"Take care not to catch the pillow in the noose," said the tinman, "for that might spoil the job; but if you can slip it in on one side, I can stand behind the curtain on the other, we can then cross the ends, and with one good pull the thing's done and over."

"Musn't pull too hard," answered the woman, "or you'll make a mark."

"Why, you seem up to the trick, my dear," said Mr. Small dram,

"I remember when Betty Price killed her baby," whispered Mrs. Scapulary, "they said she never would have been found out if she had been more gentle about it."

"Ay, ay, it's that overdoing a thing," said the tin-man in a philosophical tone, "that spoils every job. Moderation in all things—moderation in all things is the great rule! Why, what o'clock is that?"

"It's four, upon my honour," replied Mrs. Scapulary.

"How the time goes in pleasant conversation," observed Mr. Small dram; "but upon my life we must get to business, if the thing's to be done at all."

"Stop a bit," exclaimed Mrs. Scapulary, "let us have a glass more any how: here's just enough for you and me;" and she divided the last of the bottle between herself and her counsellor.

It was very evident, that whether she was affected by fear or compunction, she had some little reluctance to begin the task she had undertaken, and Mr. Small dram thought that he would be wanting in courtesy if he pressed her too severely. He accordingly waited, only indicating by long pauses his impatience to proceed with the work, till about a quarter to five, when he remarked with a particular emphasis, "It will soon be daylight."

"Well," said Mrs. Scapulary, "let us set about it;" and he pulling off his shoes, and she her slippers, they crept quietly, and on tiptoe, into the room of the devoted clerk.

Poor Mr. Scapulary was in a profound sleep; the rushlight, which he had indulged in since he was taken ill, had burnt low down in the shade, and there was just light enough to see the face of the pale, weakened old man, as he lay breathing hard upon his back. Mrs. Scapulary consoled and strengthened herself by calling him a nasty old varmint, and then stooping down, drew from under the bed a long stout rope, which she and her friend examined for a moment with inquiring eyes.

"It will do," said Mr. Small dram, in a scientific tone. "I will go round on this here side of the bed, and you stay on that there. Let me keep behind the curtain till you get the rope through, for fear he

should wake as you are slipping it under. Whenever it's all safe I'll take the end."

This being arranged in a whisper, the worthy gentleman proceeded to the other side of the bed, and ensconced himself snugly behind the curtain; and the lady, taking the end of the rope dexterously between her finger and thumb, slipped it, together with her arm, under the old man's neck.

Tobias Scapulary was certainly somewhat roused by this unusual mark of affection, and growled out, "What's the matter now?"

"You are lying uncomfortable, my dear," said the lady in a sweet tone.

"Let me alone," said the old man again; "I should lie more comfortably if you had never lain beside me."

A silence ensued for a moment or two, and then Mr. Smalldram gently emerging from his concealment took the end of the rope in his hand, pulled it rapidly through, and twisted it with the other end, which was thrown to him by Mr. Scapulary's better half. All this could not be executed without waking the worthy clerk, who raised himself a little on one elbow in wonder and fear, exclaiming, "Hallo! what's the matter? Ugh, ugh, ugh!" and back he fell upon the bed, while his wife pulled on one side and Mr. Smalldram on the other; the latter forgetting the caution he had received, and tugging so hard as nearly to throw down his partner in this act of tuggee.

"Hold fast," cried Mr. Smalldram. "How the old fellow kicks! There, it'll soon be over! Now, I think he ought to be obliged to us for putting him out of his pain."

"Why, he's kicked all the bed-clothes off," said Mrs. Scapulary. "Do help me to put him straight. Why, what are you about?"

"Only seeing what he has got in his breeches-pocket," said Mr. Smalldram.

"I declare that's not fair," said Mrs. Scapulary.

"That's a good un," said the man. "Not fair? Why, you didn't think that I was going to meddle with a job like this for nothing? Come, come! you've got all that is to come after, my dear: so I'll just have this *ass in presenti*, as the schoolmaster calls it," and thus saying he thrust into his own breeches-pockets a whole handful of money, notes, and papers, which he had found in those of the defunct Mr. Scapulary.

"Well, help me to smooth him down," said Mrs. Scapulary. "That's the least you can do. Why, we shall have somebody coming."

"Nonsense!" replied her worthy coadjutor, "every body is a-bed and asleep."

"Why, it is quite daylight!" cried the woman, angrily; "don't you see the blue light gleaming through the shutters!"

"Well, then, it is time to set things straight indeed," said Mr. Smalldram; "and so we'll begin with his legs."

"Untie the rope first!" replied the lady, who did seem to be, as her friend remarked, somewhat of a connoisseur—I wish we could make that word, feminine, in our tongue—"Untie the rope, or you'll have a ring round his neck as blue as a beadle's coat!"

The rope was accordingly untied, and stowed away safely under the bed; the limbs were straightened: the bed put in order, and the whole room made tidy, as Mrs. Scapulary expressed herself. After which, leaving the rushlight to burn itself out, the pretty pair walked into the next chamber where they found that the candle which they had left nearly in the socket when they had proceeded on their enterprise, had taken the liberty of extinguishing itself, leaving a considerable smell of fried tallow, which, mingled with the accumulated fragrance of gin, produced not the most odoriferous atmosphere in the little parlour. Mrs. Scapulary lighted another candle, for from some mysterious cause they did not like to open the shutters and let in the daylight. They then stood for several minutes gazing in each other's faces in silence.

"Well, Tom," asked the lady, "what's to be done now?"

"Nothing that I know of," replied her friend. "I shall go home, and go to bed I think."

"I don't like to go to bed," said the woman. "I'll wait here till a little after six, and then go out for some milk. It's somewhat early, but I'll say he wants some very bad."

"Ay! that'll be a good blind," cried Mr. Small dram. "Then you can come home and find him dead and make a great outcry!"

"That's it!" rejoined the lady. "Mind that you don't flush any of those birds you've got in your pocket, Mr. Tom. The folks know well enough your purse may be carried very easy; so take care till you and I are married."

"Don't be afraid!" replied Mr. Small dram; "I am as careful as a squirrel; but I had better be jogging—I say, look out, there's a dear, and see if there is any body near."

"Not I," cried the lady. "Peep through a cranny, and then bolt!"

Not without much care and some hesitation did the *ci-devant* tin-man screw up his mind to leave the cottage, which stood at an angle of the road near the church. But after having opened the door carefully, and looked up and down with a somewhat anxious glance, he darted away, crossed the churchyard-stile, and disappeared amongst the trees.

Mrs. Scapulary closed the door, which he had left open, and then stood for two or three minutes staring down upon the table. Was it remorse that stung her?—was it repentance? No, reader, no!—Was it fear? No, reader, no! She had taken her precautions, as she thought, so well, that fear had little to do with it. She was thinking, on the contrary, on the handful of money and other things that her friend had crammed into his breeches-pocket, and reproaching herself for letting him take them.

"I've a great mind to accuse him of the murder!" she thought. "The money will be found upon him, and he can't prove I had any hand in it! We'll see. If all goes quietly, why well—if not, it may look as if he did it while I was away—I'll go out directly. There goes six o'clock."

She had to return into the next room for her bonnet and shawl, and for the first time she felt something like awe as she did so. All was so still that the small still voice seemed to make itself attended to. She would have given something to have heard the old man snore. Snatch-

ing down the things from the shelf, she put them on in the parlour, and then hurried out closing the door behind her.

She had been gone about ten minutes when some one knocked at the outer door and then lifted the latch. The door opened quickly and the head of no less a person than Joey Pike appeared. "Mrs. Scapulary!" he said, entering. "Hist, Mrs. Scapulary!—we have committed a murder, and the *john d'arms* are upon our trusses—*Non c'e signore!*—They are early people too—I'll tap at the *camera di letto*. Perhaps they are *dentro*. I'll shut this door first, however," and after closing the aperture by which he had entered, he approached the inner room, and now for the first time perceived that the door was ajar. "Hist, Mrs. Scapulary!" he continued, in a low tone. "The old man is ill, and I dare say she is asleep, *povera*, quite exhausted, poor dear *fanciulla—rendue*, as the French say; but I must disturb her," and pushing open the door with a flourish of his hand he entered with one toe pointed, the other extended behind him in the attitude of John of Bologna's Mercury, and his head turned towards his left shoulder as if in the act of listening. The stillness surprised him, especially as the rushlight was still burning, and approaching the bedside, he looked in and beheld the dead body of poor old Tobias Scapulary!

"*E Morto!*" exclaimed Joey, in a Tamburini tone, and then opening the window-shutter he looked into the bed again. The sight which was now for the first time clearly displayed, had a great effect upon Joey. The eyes of the corpse were starting from the head, the tongue was hanging from the mouth; and without adding any farther particulars, all the signs of a violent death presented themselves on the face of the corpse. Joey was seized with an universal trembling; and not at all liking his quarters, he rushed into the parlour, opened the outer door, nearly knocked down a man with a spade that was going quietly along, and made off across the country at a very rapid rate.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. LONMORE PROVES THAT HE CAN BE AN UNPLEASANT COMPANION—THE CHEVALIER'S DIPLOMATIC BENIGNITY—THE NATURAL PHILOSOPHER FAILS IN SETTING THE THAMES ON FIRE, BUT SUCCEEDS WITH HIS OWN HOUSE—LAURA GETS OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN IN THE USUAL MANNER.

HARRY Worrel sat upon the arm of the sofa, holding Laura's hand in his, and Laura sat upon the sofa beside him, with her beautiful eyes turned up towards his face, like one of the pretty little angels at the foot of Titian's magnificent picture of the ascension of the Virgin, at Venice, and they thus wasted nearly an hour looking at each other and

saying little ; though, abstractedly speaking, it was very odd for them to do so, as they had seen each other's faces very often before, and knew every line and feature therein perfectly well. Such was the state of things when their conference was brought to a sudden close by the door opening and Mr. Longmore himself appearing with an open note in his hand, and by no means his usual placable expression in his face. It was evidently, as the great poet wrote, "torture, fury, rage, despair, I cannot, cannot bear!" He did not, indeed, seem in the least surprised to find Worrel in the drawing-room, but he did appear to be a little embarrassed as to how he should commence the attack he evidently meditated upon some one. When Mardonius contended with Pausanias at the famous battle of Plataea, both the Persian and the Greek army paused for several days, unwilling to commence that awful strife in which five hundred thousand men encountered each other with the purpose of cutting each other's throats. A retrograde movement on the part of the Greeks—and a most idiotical movement it was, as it was conducted, though it ended in undeserved victory—a retrograde movement on the part of the Greeks, inducing an erroneous belief that they were in retreat, brought on the battle ; and such was the case also in the present instance—for if Harry Worrel had continued sitting nonchalantly on the arm of the sofa, swinging his leg with a grace, and taking the whole business quite as a matter of course, Mr. Longmore would have found great difficulty in commencing the affray. Instead of that, however, Harry jumped down, looked foolish, and began to stammer forth some account of his sudden return.

"Sir," said Mr. Longmore, "I am not in the least surprised to see you—I doubt not you have run here as hard as you could come—I trust, however, that it is the last time that you will present yourself in my house! So, sir, you must needs go and shoot the gentleman I had selected for my son-in-law. I can tell you, sir, that if you took that way to recommend yourself as his successor, you are very much mistaken. I beg that you will take your departure as speedily as possible ; for though, perhaps, I am in duty bound to cause you to be taken up immediately, yet I would rather not so deal with my near kinsman, if I can avoid it!"

"Oh! papa, dear papa!" cried Laura, "do not be so hard-hearted!"

"Hush, girl," exclaimed the old gentleman ; "if I thought you had given this young man any encouragement I'd — I'd — I'd turn you out of doors too!"

Laura, very confident that he would not long keep her out, almost wished that he would fulfil his threat, that she might have a fair excuse for making a little tour to Gretna Green with him she loved best on all the earth. But Worrel having recovered himself, and the worst of the business now being over, made, by accident, one of those happy replies which, though it did not check the fury of Mr. Longmore at the time, rested upon his mind for many months after, and by tickling gently one of the weak points about him, greatly mollified him towards the speaker.

"Well, sir," he said, "I am sorry you disapprove of my conduct ; but I do think, when you come to consider of it, you will not judge

so harshly, and will see, that I ought not to suffer *your kinsman* to be grossly insulted by any man in all the realm, be he a poor man, or be he a prince." Now, had Worrel called himself any thing else on earth but "your kinsman," it would not have had the same effect upon Mr. Longmore; as it was, however, it struck him even at the moment, that there was some truth in what Worrel said, and that *his kinsman* ought not to be insulted. The current of his anger did, perhaps, ebb a little; but he still continued to insist upon Worrel's quitting the house in the same tone in which he had begun.

"Sir," he said, "I care nothing about that: you might be insulted or you might not, that is nothing to me! But, sir, what is very much to me is, your making love to my daughter, sir. That I don't choose; and, I must say that it was very wrong, when you well knew that I always intended her to marry the Honourable Henry Augustus Frederick Fitzurse, and in due course of time become Viscountess Outrun."

"Indeed, my dear sir," replied Harry, "I knew no such thing, for if I had known it, I might have kept myself out of the way of temptation."

"That you wouldn't, Harry," said Laura, half laughing, half crying; "but one thing I know, though I don't mean to be disobedient, and do what papa tells me not, yet nothing on earth would ever have made me marry that ugly sot, if he and I had lived for ever."

"Laura, you will put me in a passion," cried Mr. Longmore, "a state I have not been in since your poor, dear mother died. But there is only one word needs to be said—you must go, Mr. Worrel, you must go; and let me beg of you not to come back again, till you are sent for, which will be long enough, I trow."

Worrel felt anger mingling with sorrow and disappointment, and being somewhat afraid of his own temper, he made up his mind to the bitter step, which he knew he must take at last, which was neither more nor less than a step out of the drawing-room window. Snatching up his hat then, and resolved—like all prudent people, when they find that they cannot get every thing that they want—to take as much as he could get, he caught Laura to his bosom, for a moment, gave her one warm and hearty kiss, much to Mr. Longmore's consternation and astonishment, and without waiting for a reproof, walked out at once into the garden, through the shrubbery, up the hill, and into the little fir-wood at the top.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Longmore and Laura were left confronting each other; and, to say the truth, Laura's courage, like that of Bob Acres, began to ooze out at the palms of her hands: to which diminution of valour, if we say the truth, the kiss she had just received from her lover had not a little contributed. It was not alone that being kissed in company is, in itself, a somewhat agitating thing; and also, that being kissed before her father, against her father's will, was still more agitating; but also, that Laura recollected that this identical kiss was the last she was likely to have for a very long time, which was the most agitating of all. With that kiss came to an end, perhaps for years, the sweet whispered words of mutual confidence, the looks

that explained or directed more fully than an oration, the meaning smile, the light laugh to one another, the gay jest, comprehended by none but themselves—all were over for the time, and Laura thought with the poet, "*Sine amore jocisque nil est jucundum.*"

Her courage then had failed her, her heart was sad, and, in short, she was not at all in a fit condition to encounter an angry man. Had she acted politically—as she knew from her experience of her father's character what would be the right way to assuage his anger, and to come at her own object—Laura would have laughed at him, teased him; made light of him; but somehow, she had not the heart to do it at the moment that she knew it to be the most necessary; and there she stood before him looking like a culprit, which is always the surest possible way to be condemned as such. What might have come of it no one can tell; but just at the moment when Mr. Longmore was about to pour forth a torrent of anger and reprehension upon his poor daughter's head—when he was in the very act of opening his mouth to tell her, that he would leave her his curse, his whole curse, and nothing but his curse, if she ever thought of marrying Harry Worrel—the sound of an easy-going horse was heard, and the cantering galloway was seen coming along the road with no other than the Chevalier de Lunatico upon his back.

The whole soul of Mr. Longmore melted at the sight of his new acquaintance, such was the wonderful effect of the chevalier's powers, and out the old gentleman ran to pour forth into the friendly ear of the peripatetic chevalier the tale of his misfortunes. Every thing was displayed in a moment; all the little secret vanities which were wounded by what had occurred to Mr. Fitzurse, all the private stock of petty passions, concealed purposes, and latent expectations, which go to make up the sum of every man's motives in every course that he pursues; how it would have been very pleasant for him to hear his daughter called Viscountess Outrun, and to have it put down in the peerage that she was the daughter of Jerry Longmore, Esquire, of Ivy-hall, in the county of ———; and how the mayor of the neighbouring town, who had made a large fortune as an attorney, and had three unmarried daughters, would have been ready to eat his nails when he heard that Laura Longmore had become the Honourable Mrs. Fitzurse; and how he (Mr. Longmore) would have looked down upon the aldermen and town councillors, who had neglected or refused to give him their votes when his name was put up for the mayoralty. There were fifty similar beautiful prospects blighted by the unfortunate affair of the morning, and Mr. Longmore was infinitely relieved by unbudgetting his griefs to the chevalier; who, with true diplomatic self-possession and propriety, walked on beside him into the drawing-room, took Laura's hand and kissed the tips of her fingers with ceremonious respect, and inquiring tenderly after her health, whispered, in a low voice, that all was well and would go well. He then turned to Mr. Longmore, and by his pleasant suavity, soon contrived to restore that gentleman to equanimity. He did not press him upon the subject of Worrel, indeed, nor give any opinion upon the various matters which Mr. Longmore submitted to his consideration, as to whether he (Mr. Longmore) had not been

very ill treated, as to whether Laura had not behaved shamefully, as to whether Worrel had not behaved worse, and as to whether Mr. Fitzurse was not the very most eligible husband that could possibly be selected. Acting with becoming caution, the chevalier gave a guarded answer to all these questions. He pointed out to Mr. Longmore that it was the most natural thing in the world for two young people to fall in love with each other, but that if they did nothing more than fall in love, no great harm was done. "Love and matrimony," he continued, "are, as you well know, my dear sir, the most distinct things in the world, very often indeed the most opposite. As far as I can learn, there is no connection between them whatsoever, so that thousands fall in love without marrying, and thousands marry every day without falling in love. Thus, my dear sir, the past seems to me better than you imagine, and nobody can tell what may be in the womb of futurity; so that leaving destiny to work her part, and bring forth the yet unevolved events which lie hid under the dark apron of the coming times, let us rejoice in the facilities which are allotted to decorate the present moment, cull the floral blossoms that burgeon for us on the bountiful branches of each instant of our time, and satiate ourselves with those delightful thoughts and exhilarating reflections which prolong the season of rejoicing life, and procrastinate the approach of the period of decay and extinction."

"Highly philosophical and beautiful," said Mr. Longmore; and though Laura thought that there was a strong touch of the rigmarole in the chevalier's speech, she took care not to say a word, while Mr. de Lunatico, with that exquisite diplomatic tact which the reader must already have discovered in him, pointed the application with the *argumentum ad hominem*, by saying—

"What I mean, my dear sir, is, that although, in consequence of your oath, you cannot admit me into your observatory, you have, I know, a thousand curious and wonderful discoveries and inventions in sciences unconnected with astronomy which you are bound, by the liberality of true philosophy, to make me fully acquainted with."

Mr. Longmore sprang at the bait, like a half-famished trout at a May-fly, and the chevalier making a martyr of himself for the sake of the fair Laura, was soon plunged into Galvanic troughs, surrounded by leaden vessels, the butt of electrical machines, and impaled upon the needles of microscopes. Sometimes he was wheezing under the presence of an infinity of azote; sometimes he was coughing under a superabundance of oxygen; sometimes he was sneezing under the extrication of hydrogen; and just before dinner-time, Mr. Longmore set going for his especial satisfaction, his grand new invention called the self-acting-perpetuo-motival-electro-magnetic machine.

We have already explained to the reader Mr. Longmore's peculiar notions with regard to the precision of his dinner-hour, and on the present occasion the little bell, which announced that it was time for people to wash their hands, comb their hair, and smooth their faces, made itself heard at the moment that his grand machine was just getting into operation. Without waiting to stop it, Mr. Longmore retired for the purposes of ablution, and sat down to dinner, purposing to have

another look before he went to bed. The conversation, however, became animated and interesting ; Mr. Longmore forgot his purposes, and the whole party retired to rest, excepting the self-acting-perpetuo-motival-electro-magnetic machine, which went on in a furious state of activity in a little room to the right of the passage by which one entered the house. The Chevalier de Lunatico, however, had not forgotten that he was bound by engagement to meet Harry Worrel and Joey Pike that night in the garden, and accordingly, after waiting a reasonable time to suffer the inmates of the house to go sound asleep, he opened his door, descended the staircase, and was very soon shaking hands with his young friend. Joey was there also, reclining on the grass in the attitude of the dying Gladiator, and starting up with the grace of a dancing fawn, he began to give the chevalier an account, in what the newspapers call glowing language, of his visit to the cottage of poor old Scapulary. But just as he was telling the chevalier that at first sight he had thought the old man either in a state of *sincuppy*, or else *morto*, a loud explosion, like the bursting forth of a volcano, was heard in the house, and while they were gazing in each other's faces, asking each other what could be the matter, flames burst forth from two windows on the ground-floor, and every other consideration was swallowed up in the necessity of giving immediate assistance. The truth was, that the self-acting-perpetuo-motival-electro-magnetic machine had gone on working away till it had charged itself and every thing around it with such a quantity of the electric fluid, that a spark was elicited by a neighbouring piece of brass. Close by lay a large quantity of a newly-invented detonating powder, the whole mass ignited, thousands of other compounds joined the flame, and the whole place was in a blaze in a moment.

Rushing into the house, the chevalier and Harry Worrel soon roused and brought out Mr. Longmore and Laura in a state of picturesque dishabille. Joey Pike betook himself to the maids, and at the end of about five minutes the whole party were collected on the green, while a number of persons from the neighbouring cottages swarmed to the spot, and an engine came rattling up from the little town. Suddenly, however, Laura exclaimed—

“ Oh, dear, I have forgot ! Oh, dear, I have forgot ! ” And before any one could stop her she rushed back into the house by a small door which was tolerably free from the flames. Harry Worrel was at that moment working away in a different quarter to save some things for which Mr. Longmore was very anxious, but the moment he heard of Laura's proceeding, which was not till some little time had elapsed, he was rushing in after her like a madman, when he was stopped and forcibly dragged back by two men, and in an instant after the roof fell in with a dreadful crash.

CHAPTER X.

WHEREIN THE BURNING OF MR. LONGMORE'S HOUSE IS COMPARED TO ANOTHER CELEBRATED CONFLAGRATION—JERRY TRIPE PROVES CAPTIVATING, AND THE CHEVALIER, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS FRIENDS, IS PROVIDED WITH A CONVEYANCE FROM THE SCENE OF ACTION—JERRY FINDS THAT A DIAMOND CAN SOMETIMES CUT A DIAMOND, AND SHOWS THAT HE IS FERTILE IN RESOURCES—THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING IN THE SAME BASKET WITH AN ENEMY.

PANDEMONIUM was nothing to it, at least not the Pandemonium of Milton, which was, apparently, a well-regulated, quiet congregation of gentlemanly devils, and very much more orderly than most British Houses of Commons—especially since the reform bill. But, as I was saying, Pandemonium was nothing to it in any respect, except the fire; for it is probable that what Shakespeare calls “the everlasting bonfire,” was a blaze or two stronger than the conflagration of poor Mr. Longmore's house. But, in one or two particulars, the burning of Ivy-hall certainly outdid the other place; they might have plenty of demons in Hades, but they had no fire engines; they had no constables, pretending to keep order, and creating confusion at every step; they had no firemen; they had no parish beadle; they had no crowd of lookers-on, shouting, and roaring, and bellowing forth every sort of contradictory direction; they had no little boys crying out “My eye!”

Thus, we may well say, that Pandemonium was nothing to the scene round Mr. Longmore's house just at the moment when—about half an hour after the fire began—one-half of the people of the neighbouring manufacturing town, and a great number from the country round, had found time to come up with engines, carts, water buckets, and constables' staves. The sights and the noises were all equally terrible; the people were shouting, as we have said; the cattle in the cow-house were bellowing; the dogs were barking and howling; the fire was roaring, and the engine pipes were hissing; a good number of women were screaming, and some of the children, whose toes had been trod upon, were crying. Then as to the sights—fire and smoke were issuing from every window, and towering over the observatory; while flames of every colour, that an infinite variety of chemical compounds could produce, were flickering over the walls, and casting the most extraordinary hues over the countenances of the spectators. Now, they were all as blue as bilberries with the flare up of spirits-of-wine and sulphur; then they were as green as grass from the ignition of copper and muriatic acid; then they were as yellow as a London fog; and then they were as red as the sun when he struggles through it. Here was seen a chimney falling in; there appeared a fireman perched upon a tottering

wall; in one place were two constables taking each other into custody by mistake; in another, was an Irish engineer cutting off the fire by knocking down a small building, on the top of which a whole brigade of his companions were standing; and in the midst of a group of maids, fainting in the most determined manner, might be beheld Mr. Longmore tearing his hair, and Harry Worrel struggling violently with two men who strove to hold him; while on a little mound stood Joey Pike with his head turned away from the building, as if to keep his eyes from the sight, and his two hands extended towards it, much in the attitude of one of the young people in the famous group of Niobe and her children.

“*O Dio che pena!*” cried Joey Pike.”

“Let me go, or by Heaven I will pitch you into the flames,” exclaimed Worrel.

“My daughter, my poor girl!” said Mr. Longmore. “Oh, if you will get her out I will let her marry any one she likes.”

But it was all in vain; nobody dared to approach the part of the building which Laura had entered, except Harry Worrel, and the two men who held him would not let him, although he struggled with them most furiously, and would not listen to a word they said. He had nearly shaken off their hold, however, when a third came up and got hold of his collar behind, and, at the same time, a fourth appeared in front, presenting to his sight the never-to-be-forgotten or mistaken rubicund proboscis of Jeremy Tripe, looking in the hot blaze of the fire like a fresh-made beef sausage upon a gridiron.

“Now,” said Jerry, “now you’ve got one of them; don’t miss the other two. There stands my friend Joey; one of you two grab him, and I’ll take Tom with me, and get hold of Master Mousetrappico. Come along, Tom, get out your staff, my man, for he’s a cunning old blade, and up to a thing or two.”

Thus saying, he led the way up to the place where the chevalier stood, endeavouring to be consolatory upon Mr. Longmore; and the gentleman, who was called Tom, laid his hand upon the commissioner’s shoulder, thrusting a short ebony stick, with a brass crown on the top of it, into his face, and remarking pithily, “I apprehend you for murder.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed the chevalier with a benignant smile, not at all unwilling to see all the phases of life in Great Britain. “Indeed! Upon this business of Mr. Fitzurse, I suppose?”

“Exactly so, sir,” replied the constable.

“Well, then,” rejoined the chevalier, looking full in the face of Jeremy Tripe, “every one present being a *particeps criminis*, I give this good gentleman with the rubicund gnomon in charge also; for I’m resolved not to be without the pleasure of his company.”

Every part of the countenance of Jeremy Tripe which could turn white did so, and the nose remained, like the top of Mont Blanc at sunset, still rosy with the light that had left the rest of his countenance. He loved not the idea of prisons; he was in no way fond of the idea of magisterial investigations; but there was no help for it in the present

case. The charge was given; the constable could not help taking him, and in a very few minutes the Chevalier de Lunatico, Harry Worrel, Joey Pike, and Jeremy Tripe, were proceeding in a light cart towards the village of Outrun under the tender care of a couple of constables.

Constables, however, are, and ever have been, thirsty souls; the fire at Ivy Hall had heated and dried them, at least so it seemed from the expressions they made use of; for one declared, close in the ear of Mr. de Lunatico, that he would give something for a pot of beer to moisten his clay, and the other vowed that he was as thirsty as a sandpit in the dog days. The chevalier did not take the hint: perhaps indeed did not understand it; but Jeremy Tripe did both, and replied, "There is very good beer at the George, half a mile on the road. If you like to stop there for an hour I'll stand a pot or two."

The chevalier listened with some attention, for although he had, as we have shown, acquired a marvellous knowledge of the English tongue, there was one branch of it of which he was utterly ignorant, and that, one of the richest and most poetical of all its dialects; I mean the language of the Elephant and castle, and the parts adjacent. Thus, though he easily conceived that the respectable butler of Lord Outrun was employing some sublime figure of rhetoric, yet he could not comprehend, even after much puzzling, how Mr. Tripe could *stand a pot or two*. If he had said that he would stand *in* a pot or two, the chevalier thought he could have seen some meaning; but, as it was, he could only suppose that the pots were to be thrown at the worthy butler's head, which, he concluded, must be some sort of process in law peculiar to this country.

"He says he will stand a pot or two," remarked the chevalier in a low voice to Harry Worrel. "Shall we all have to go through the same ceremony?"

"I suppose so," said Worrel, in a tone of despair; and the chevalier would have gone on, labouring under the same mistake, had not Mr. Tripe himself explained his own plans and purposes in a low and confidential tone.

"You see," he said, "if I give them something to drink——"

"Oh!" said the chevalier, "that's what you mean by standing a pot or two, is it?"

"Exactly," answered Jerry; "if I give them something to drink, Mr. Worrel must do the same, and you'll come in perhaps with something stronger, a go or two of moonshine, or something of that sort."

"With all my heart," said the chevalier; "that's quite in my way; but what then?"

"Why, then, we'll make them drunk," said Jerry. "I know Tom the constable well enough. He never could resist liquor in his life, and yet when he gets it, he can't carry it. However we'll make them drunk, and then it will be easy enough for us to make our escape."

"Rather a strange proceeding this on your part," said the chevalier, putting his hand in his pocket once more, "first to give me into custody, and next to help me to escape."

"Ay, but I was not in the same basket at first," said Mr. Tripe;

“ you checkmated me there, Master Pragmatico. Now that you have put me in the same unpleasant condition with yourself, I'll do my best to get out, even though I'm forced to take you along with me. I'll tell you what, old gentleman, if one could serve all lawgivers as you served me, and make them taste a touch of the rod that they pickle for other people, we should have a somewhat more humane statute-book than we have got. Many a judge may like hanging but not being hanged, and half the members of parliament who vote water-gruel for the poor, would make it turtle-soup if they had the eating of it. No, no, I'm not fond of being put in prison 'till the next assizes, it don't suit me at all.”

“ But perhaps it may suit me,” replied the chevalier; “ tastes may differ you know, Mr. Tripe ?”

“ Your's must be a rum 'un, then,” rejoined the butler; “ but you'll never be such a fool surely as to keep Mr. Worrel here and our friend Joey in prison for a month, and very likely have them hanged after all, for a mere whim ?”

“ For a *frolic*, perhaps !” said the chevalier with emphasis. “ What say you, Joey ? Have you much aversion to see the inside of a prison ?”

“ Great,” replied Joey, throwing out his right arm and laying his left hand upon his breast, as if he were about to say—“ My name is Norval. On the Grampian hills my father feeds his flock—” “ Great, most potent, grave, and reverend signor ! Nevertheless I am ready to follow you to captivity and to death. I am your *devooy*. Let us go, sir, let us go,” he continued, tossing aloft his arms—“ *sventurato io son*. Yes, sir, I will go with you, and while we remain I will write with a *calymo cowntanty* a history of *i miei prigioni*. We will be second *Sylvia Pellicles*.”

“ What the devil is he talking about ?” exclaimed the constable, who had caught a few of the last words. “ If he don't mind I'll put the darbies on him.”

“ No, no; you won't, Tom,” said Jerry Tripe. “ We're all quiet respectable people, you know; and besides, this sort of murder isn't like another, you know. Nobody's ever hanged for it. It's one of those diseases that cures itself. I heard the parson once say that in this, as in other instances, the enormity of the crime secured its impunity, and that gentlemen who commit murder aren't hanged like other men, because they ought to know better. There's every reason why a juryman should perjure himself for a gentleman; but there's no reason on earth why he should perjure himself for a beggar. It would be a hard case if those who make the laws and those who dispense them, have not a right to put by any little pet crimes for their own private picking. So as to putting any one into the darbies for having had a hand in a duel, that would be very improper indeed !”

“ Ay, ay,” answered the constable, “ that's true enough; but we have not got this here fellow, 'cause of the trick in the lane. He's booked for the murder of old Toby Scapulary the clerk !”

Joey Pike uttered a shriek. One would have supposed they had got Miss O'Neill acting Jane Shore in the cart. “ I knew it,” he cried; “ I knew it !”

“ Then why the devil did you do it ? ” said the constable. “ But don’t go on screeching in that way, or I’ll handcuff you in good earnest.”

Joey, in the mortal agony which the thought of handcuffs produced, thrust the chevalier to one side of the cart and Harry Worrel to the other, knocked Jerry Tripe back by a kick in the stomach, and dropping gracefully upon one knee, with his head bent and his hands extended, remained in the position of Domenichino’s St. Ann bowing her head for martyrdom.

The constable was puzzled, and certainly would have handcuffed him to bring his graces to an end, but it was the story of the bell-ringer and the king: he had no handcuffs to put on, and Jerry Tripe recovering his position, bent his red nose benignly over Joey and interceded with the constable in moving terms. The latter suffered himself to be appeased, the discussion in regard to pots of beer was renewed, and after sundry soft solicitations Tom himself ordered the cart to stop at the road-side alehouse, and the prisoners were ushered into a room where the foaming tankard began to circulate freely at the expense of Mr. Tripe. Tom and his fellow-constable did ample justice to the goodness of the malt; but after a while they found beer rather cold for the stomach, and the chevalier taking the butler’s hint proposed some moonshine, which however cool in name proved somewhat fiery in nature. Tom vowed he would take no more, but consented to drink a glass with Jerry; then remarking the lachrymose state of Mr. Pike’s face, he invited him to some half-and-half to cheer him; then respectfully drank Mr. Worrel’s health and then the chevalier’s; after which he repeated his vow, and like an honest man anxious to avoid temptation, made an effort to get upon his legs. By some process or another, however, a large quantity of lead seemed to have been transposed into his nether man. He was, in short, exactly like one of those little tumbling figures, which, whatever way you turn them, fall back upon the loaded end. Down he went upon his chair as often as he got upon his feet, and finding it impossible to contend with circumstances, he determined to wait for a better opportunity, and while meditating upon the frailty of human nature, instinctively filled himself another glass. At the same moment, to his surprise and consternation his fellow-constable volunteered a song, and with unparalleled generosity treated the company to the sound of his voice without reward, or pressing, or invitation either.

CONSTABLE’S SONG.

There was an old man, in Warwick town,
 (Hiccup.)
 Who wanted to treat a girl to a gown;
 (Hiccup.)
 He went into a shop, with a hey-derry down,
 And took a piece off—by mistake.
 (Hiccup.)

The shopman he grabbed his neck in a trice,
 And said, he should pay summat more than the price;
 Or of Bottomy Bay he would give him a spice—
 And that without any mistake.

“I can’t, indeed, Mr. President—I’m very hoarse—I’ve forgot the next stanza—there’s no use pressing a man when he says he can’t.”

“Timothy, you’re drunk,” hiccupped Tom his compeer.

“Drunk! you lie, it’s you are drunk!” and thereupon Tom becoming pugnacious made a vast effort to rise from his seat for the purpose of knocking down Timothy; but Jerry Tripe on this occasion generously interfered and brought about a reconciliation over a jorum of half-and-half, which left one constable in a fit of maudlin, and the other in that uproarious stage which very frequently precedes profound quietude.

“Ay, Joey, Joey,” cried Tom, addressing our poor friend Joey Pike, who had sat in deep despondency at one corner of the table; “You’re a good creature, Joey; you’re an excellent good creature upon my life. How could you think of murdering the poor old man?—I loved old Scapulary, upon my soul I did—I loved old Toby Scapulary—very much indeed—I loved him like my brother. He buried my grandfather.—Indeed he did, dug the grave and all—” and thereupon he burst into a profuse flood of tears.

“Ri fal lal de ral tit,” cried the other constable. “Jerry Tripe, here’s to ye, old covey—you’re a rum ’un as ever I see, with your nose like a beet-root, and your eye like an oyster—D—n me why do you reel about in your chair? You’re as drunk as David’s sow, Jerry—not the first time by some thousands, I should think—and there’s Tom looks as if he had got two heads. He that never had half a one in his life.—What are you sitting so solemn for, Master Harry? You’re drunk too; stupid drunk, I suppose—that’s worse than merry drunk like old Jerry Tripe.”

Worrel looked very much as if he would have knocked the constable down, but such an act would certainly have been an act of supererogation; for Timothy, by sundry curious evolutions, contrived to get hold of the gin bottle, made himself another glass of gin and water, one to two (by the inverse rule of three) stirred it up with the brass end of his constable’s staff, drank off one half it, and then slipping over the bench on which he was sitting, came gently down, with the back of his head leaning upon a chair in a corner, and his feet propped up by the bench, nearly on a level with the table. His companion, Tom, moralized over his fall, shed tears for his loss, and by immense exertions got himself upon his knees to pick him up. But the effort extinguished all that was left of power and reason in the body of Tom the constable, and falling athwart his friend they remained together on the floor, forming a St. Andrew’s cross, the grace of which no one attempted to disturb.

“Now, gentlemen,” said Jerry Tripe, “I’m at your service. Mr. Extatico, with your leave we’ll pay the bill, and be off. I know what



U O P K

Mr. Trippe fuddles the Constable

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the score will be so let every one get a portion of shillings and my men, and then there will be no more trouble of this kind."

The matter was soon arranged to his liking & satisfaction, the whole party walked out of the parlour, Jerry pulled the bell and the landlord seemed not in the least displeas'd in our being gone. The car was stood at the door and in a few minutes I was in the saddle, the quickest means of getting out of town's way. The yellow-haired boy seized the reins, placed himself in the saddle of Pegasus in the twinkling-piece to Gort's transmission of him, and in the twinkling of an eye they were gone. But after they had gone about a quarter of a mile the yellow-haired butler seized the horse's head in the corner of a lane and exclaimed, "Now, we'll talk them!" and when he perceived that it would be better to descend and separate, turning the horse and the man the other way, he said, heaven only knows where and in what I was intended for the best to get. The man was immediately set on his feet and loosely over the horse's back and I could hardly believe myself to that part which was indeed the case, he got off as fast as his rapidity as he could command, leaving Jerry and the horse behind him.

"Excuse me if I don't invite you to my house," said Jerry, taking leave of his companions; and without further ado he walked over a gate into the nearest field, and left the other three to pursue their course as they liked.

CHAPTER II

SOME SUSPICIONS OF A ...

"WHERE shall we go, Jerry?" said the ...

"Ah, doorey!" said Jerry, ...

"I care little where I go, ...

deep grief; ...

"Still," said the ...

find some place in which to ...

a bad exchange, from the ...

our lodging, ...

"I am very well, I ...

my dear friend, I have ...

veniences. However, I ...

miles across the moor, near ...

cottage of my father-in-law, ...

see very little of the ...

1954

the score will be, so let every one put a couple of shillings into my hat, and then there will be no long reckoning in the tap."

The matter was soon arranged to Mr. Tripe's satisfaction, the whole party walked out of the parlour, Jerry paid for all, and the landlord seemed not in the least disposed to bar their egress. The cart still stood at the door and into it they all got, judging it would afford the quickest means of getting out of harm's way. The renowned Joey seized the reins, placed himself in the attitude of Phæton in the frontispiece to Garth's translation of Ovid, shook the reins and away they went. But after they had gone about a quarter of a mile, the judicious butler seized the youth's arm at the corner of a lane, and exclaiming, "Now, we'll bilk them!" informed his bearers that it would be better to descend and separate, turning the horse and cart into the lane, which led, he said, heaven only knows where, and in which it was impossible for the beast to turn. The whip was ingeniously tied so as to dangle loosely over the horse's back, and a sound bastinado being applied to that part which was nearest the cart, he set off with as much rapidity as he could command, leaving deep tracks of the wheels behind him.

"Excuse me if I don't invite you to my house," said Jerry Tripe, taking leave of his companions; and without farther farewell he vaulted over a gate into the nearest field, and left the other three to pursue their course as they liked.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME SUSPICION OF A GHOST—A SCENE OF BORROW—THE BENEVOLENT BAILER.

"WHERE shall we go now?" said the chevalier.

"Ah, *doavey!* indeed," said Joey Pike, in a desponding tone.

"I care little where I go now," replied Worrel, in the accents of deep grief; "all the world is the same to me, and all is void."

"Still," said the chevalier, "it is perhaps necessary that we should find some place in which to pass the night; otherwise we have made a bad exchange, from the cart for our conveyance, and a prison for our lodging, to our own legs and a dirty lane."

"I am very selfish, I believe," replied Worrel; "and certainly, my dear friend, I have no right to make you suffer such inconveniences. However, I can find you a place of shelter. About two miles across the moor, near the little village of Winterly, lies the cottage of my foster-mother, a widow woman with an only son. They see very little of the world there, so we shall be safe; and, although

she is gone to bed, poor thing ! long before this time, I can venture to knock her up."

"A foster-mother ! a foster-mother !" cried the chevalier. "Have people two mothers in this country ?—How do they manage it ?"

"Sometimes it happens," answered Harry Worrel, "that mothers cannot nurse their own children. Sometimes nature, sometimes circumstances forbid it. The former was the case with my poor mother, and I was nursed by this good woman whom I mentioned."

"True, master Harry, true," replied Joey Pike ; "but you know there are plenty of mothers in England, who, with every sort of *agreemang* and *commodity*, never think of nursing their poor babies at all. They turn over their children to *mercenaires*—all for fear of spoiling their *bellezza*."

"You must introduce me to a few of them, Joey," said the chevalier. "I think I should have a word or two to say to those women who deprive themselves of that occupation for which nature seems to have reserved the combination of duty and delight. But let us get on whichever way we go. Here we are, standing in the middle of the road, and the moon is under a cloud."

Harry Worrel, who was in no very loquacious mood, as the reader may well imagine, took the way in silence up the lane which led in the opposite direction to that in which the cart had been driven. The chevalier and Joey Pike followed, the one with his usual sedate demeanour, the other with the graceful step of an antelope ; and thus proceeding, they reached, in about ten minutes, a spot where, emerging from between the hedges, the road issued forth upon a wide furze-covered common with marshy spots here and there, which occasionally deviated into glistening pools. The clouds were scudding lightly over the sky, like boys and girls at play on a wide waste ; while the moon, exercising her usual power, was every now and then poking through her round white face, like the usher popping in his head to see what they were all about.

The road also, be it remarked, suddenly took a rise, as it issued forth from the lane ; and when the head of the chevalier came above the edge of the slope, he plainly saw, by the light of his native planet, the broad figure of a somewhat sturdy and thickset man about a couple of hundred yards in advance. He was standing quite still, and continued to do so for a minute ; but then, it would appear, he caught a sight of the approaching party, and—why, or wherefore, the chevalier did not know—he beat a retreat with great celerity. As the ground was uneven and Mr. Lunatico and his friends were themselves rather in a fugitive than a pursuing humour, the gentleman soon disappeared.

After having gone half-a-mile along the sandy road of the common, they came to a spot where it branched out into three, with a finger post and a stone table bearing an inscription intended to cheer and console the wayfarer on his journey, by telling him that a pedlar had been murdered there ten years before, and that two sailors had been hanged for the offence.

"I don't find it recorded," said the chevalier in an inquiring tone, "that the hanging of the sailors brought the pedlar to life again."

"No; it certainly did not," replied Worrel.

"Then," answered the chevalier, "the less said about the matter the better. Which of these roads do we take?"

"Neither," replied Worrel; "our best way will be across the moor;" and thus saying, he turned his steps into a small little-trodden pathway, upon which he had scarcely advanced a quarter of a mile when up started the same figure that the chevalier had before seen, and once more made off as fast as possible, as if very much frightened by their approach.

"'Tis the shade of the pedlar," cried Joey Pike; but the shade soon disappeared once more, and they pursued their way without seeing it again. After about a quarter of an hour's farther walking, they at length reached the cottage of Worrel's foster-mother, which, notwithstanding his anticipations, still showed a light through the little lattice window.

It was a lowly place in a lonely situation, with the thatched roof just high enough to give room for a doorway through which a man of moderate size could pass without stooping. There was a little garden before it, however, kept apparently with much neatness, and every thing indicated, that great care and pains had been taken to render it both as comfortable and as pretty as the bonds of poverty would permit.

"Why, good Nelly Bain is up, it would seem," said Worrel, looking at the light. "I didn't know she kept such late hours—it must be near one o'clock;" so saying, he advanced, and, after knocking at the door with his hand, lifted the latch and went in, followed closely by the chevalier and Joey Pike. The moment he did so, a woman of about forty-eight or forty-nine years of age, who must once have been very pretty, and who, even still, bore a sufficient trace of beauty to set at defiance the uglifying influence of a widow's cap and coarse black gown, started up, with a look of alarm, and gazed towards the door.

"It is only I, Nelly," said Worrel, "do not be afraid. I thought I saw somebody come in just before us."

"Oh! it was only Tom Smalldram, sir," said the widow. "He has been snaring rabbits on the common, and thought that some people were after him for poaching; so I let him go through the house and out the back way. But I can't help being afraid, master Harry," she continued, fixing an earnest gaze upon Worrel's countenance, "and it's the sight of your face makes me so. What should you come here for at this time of night, if it was not to tell me that something had happened to him?"

"Oh no, Nelly," replied Worrel, "I have nothing to tell you. The truth is, I want you to give us shelter till to-morrow morning. I have been unfortunate enough to shoot Mr. Fitzurse in a duel, and the people are seeking to apprehend me."

"To shoot Mr. Fitzurse!" exclaimed Nelly Bain, clasping her hands. "Good heaven, how strange!"

"It is strange," answered Worrel, "that my uncle should have had

the same fate with his father. But where is your son, Nelly? where is Will?"

"Ay, sir, that is what makes me uneasy," said the widow. "Will was never out so late as this in his life; he went to get sea-fowl's eggs, Master Harry, along the cliffs, and he has never come back, though he set out at three o'clock."

"That is strange," said Worrel; "but perhaps he has gone down to the fire." As he uttered that word, the memory of all the horrible circumstances connected with the burning of Mr. Longmore's house seemed to rush back upon his brain with more terrible vividness than ever. At first he had been stunned and crushed, as it were, by the blow he had received; and afterwards, all the particulars of his arrest and escape, though they cannot be said to have diverted his mind from the grief that possessed it, had yet confused and embarrassed his ideas; so that, as he walked along, all the incidents of the last four-and-twenty hours—the duel, the death of his adversary, the blood brought upon his own hand, the flight, the quarrel with Mr. Longmore, the fire, the loss of poor Laura—had all been floating before his eyes together, a mixed and seemingly inextricable crowd of images: but now, at the word "the fire," as if by magic, every thing else disappeared, and the death of her he loved better than all else on earth, stood forth alone before his sight, the one dark, terrible spot, which shut out the prospect of hope and happiness for ever. "The fire, the horrible fire!" he repeated, and down he sank on one of the wooden chairs, and covered his eyes with his hand.

The chevalier was approaching to offer him consolation; but just at that moment there was a sound of feet without, and people speaking in low tones, and a smothered groan. Then came a tap at the door, and a rough sailor-looking man, in an oil-skin hat, put in his head, saying in a kindly tone, "Sorry to tell ye, Mrs. Bain, Will's had a bad fall."

"Where is he? where is he?" cried the widow, clasping her hands, and rushing towards the door.

"Bad accident I am afraid, ma'am," said the fisherman, still standing in her way. "Now, don't fluster yourself: there's a good soul. We'll bring him in. Where shall we lay him?"

The widow put her hand to her heart, as if she could grasp it tight to stop its beating. "There, there!" she said, pointing to a bed that stood in a corner of the room. "Ah! my boy, my poor boy!"

They brought him in lying in the sail of a boat, and a dreadful sight it was to see! He was a fine, tall young man, a little older than Worrel himself, with good features and powerful limbs; but his countenance was now deadly pale—a bloody handkerchief was bound round his brow—one hand was grasping convulsively the edge of the sail—the other lay by his side, with that powerless lassitude which showed that the arm was broken: The right leg and thigh bent in two places where there was no joint: the eyes were closed; and the only thing that told that life still lingered was, a convulsive groan and a tremulous movement of the under jaw. The face, the hands, the clothes, were dabbled all over with blood and dirt; and so great and terrible

was the change, the mother could scarcely recognise her son. They laid him gently down upon the bed, and put a pillow under his head; and the widow, stealing forward with clasped hands, sank upon her knees by his side, and gazed at his face. Every one was silent for a minute: there was not a sound but the ticking of the wooden clock, and the deep-drawn sigh of the wounded man.

The silence and the repose seemed to rouse him: he opened his faint eyes, but they were dimmed with the shadow of death. He rolled them languidly round, and strove to speak, it seemed. For a moment there was no sound, but the next instant two or three words broke from his lips, and told the secret of his greatest agony, even in that agonizing hour. "Oh, my mother!" he said, "my mother!"

It was all he could utter; and she bent down her head over his face, and washed it with her tears.

"We found him lying under a rock, sir," said the fisherman, addressing in a low tone Harry Worrel. "He must have tumbled from the top of the cliff."

"Send somewhere immediately for a surgeon," said the chevalier in his prompt manner. "Life is still in him, and recollection: the brain, therefore, is safe. Get a horse, and bid the man gallop. No one can tell that the fine tie between spirit and matter may not be reunited."

"If any one can splice them," said the fisherman in the same tone, "it is Mr. Longshanks, the surgeon in the village. I'll run and fetch him."

Harry Worrel had approached the bed, and seeing some clammy froth round the dying man's lips, he got a cup of water, and moistened them gently. The cool liquid refreshed him, and looking up in the young gentleman's face, he gazed wistfully at it for a moment, then turned his look to the widow and shut his eyes, murmuring once more, "Oh my mother! my mother!"

Harry Worrel understood his feelings, for he knew that they were very poor, and that William Bain had devoted the prime of his young and healthy days to support his surviving parent, and make her widowed life pass happily. His foster-brother's words then went to his heart, and that heart was a kind one. So, bending down his head, he said, in a low but clear voice, "Fear not for your mother, Will! While I have a guinea in the world she shall share it."

A momentary light came into the young man's eyes: he looked up and smiled. In another instant the light was extinguished, but the smile remained. His lips moved not, his eye became glassy. There was a very slight shudder. Worrel looked eagerly in his face—the smile was there still, but it hung on the lips of the dead.

The widow had buried her eyes upon her son's bosom, and saw not the change that had taken place. No one was found to tell her; and it was only the solemn silence that at length roused her with a suspicion of the truth. She started up—she gazed upon his face—she saw the truth: the last hope went out; and, with a wild scream, she fell fainting by the side of her child.

Ere many minutes had passed, quick steps were heard: the door was

thrown unceremoniously open, and in rushed a personage in every way peculiar. He was a tall, long-sided, lankey man, with much more bone than muscle. He seemed to be about fifty-eight or fifty-nine years of age, with his grey hair tied in a queue behind; a face florid and somewhat weather-beaten, a nose bearing evident symptoms of having contended for half a century with the easterly wind, keen grey eyes, under very rough eye brows, and a benignant expression about the mouth, strongly opposed to the sharp and searching look of the upper part of the face. On his head he wore a small cocked hat, tied on, to keep it from blowing away, by a red silk handkerchief; and the rest of his dress consisted of a straight-cut, long-waisted black coat, a waist-coat with large flaps, a very small pair of breeches, and silk stockings completed by buckles at the knee and in the shoes.

"So the fool has fallen over the crag and broken his leg," he exclaimed in a rough tone, as he entered. "What the devil did he—Ha! How is this?" he continued, suddenly changing his tone to one of deep compassion, as he beheld the spectacle which that sad cottage presented. "Eh? dead! Poor fellow! poor fellow! He was a good son! he was a good son! He's gone to heaven! he's gone to heaven! Nelly Bain, I tell you your son's gone to heaven. What the devil are you crying for? May we all follow him right soon: so say I."

"She has fainted, my good friend," said Worrel.

"Fainted!" cried the surgeon, "fainted! so much the better. That's the way with women. D—n them! they get rid of half their sorrows that way. Take her up and carry her down to my house. Tell the housekeeper to put her quietly to bed, and sit with her. I'll come down and bleed her presently. Gently, gently my men: don't put her on the sail that is wet with her son's blood. Bring a mattrass out of the other room, and you two, lubbers, carry her down as carefully as if she were a cask of spirits. Don't try to rouse her up: the longer she faints the better."

The men obeyed his orders implicitly, seeming to look to him with a degree of respect which amounted to veneration—and if the truth must be told he deserved it; for never was there a kinder heart covered with a more odd and whimsical veil.

"Ah, poor fellow!" he said, apostrophising the dead body, "Ah, poor fellow! you have gone a day too soon. Sad work this, sad work. One never can get the fools that this world contains to be cautious. If it were but the breaking of their own necks one wouldn't care; but they have no right to break necks that are useful to other people. Poor fellow!" he continued, turning to the chevalier, who stood at the head of the bed, and addressing to him as a stranger his little eulogy of William Bain. "He was as good a young man, sir, as ever lived on this side of heaven—as kind a heart, as quiet and yet as brave a spirit; a friend to all around him—his mother's support and only treasure, and the love of a young heart that will soon be breaking. Poor fellow! he's gone, and it's all over, and may we all soon go after him, so say I."

There was a trickling drop in the good surgeon's small grey eye which made him feel that if he went on any farther with the subject of

William Bain he would make a fool of himself as he called it, and turning his look to Worrell, of whom he had taken no great notice hitherto, he said, abruptly, "Ah, there's another bad job! This is a night of misfortunes."

"It is, indeed," replied Worrel, with a bitter sigh.

"And you must begin this pretty day's work, Harry Worrel," continued the surgeon, "by shooting a drunken fool who deserved nothing better or worse than to be dragged through a horsepond! How could you expect the day would end well, when you began it in such a manner? but never mind, the thing's done; and, as I suppose, you're running away from justice, and want to keep out of a prison, you must come down to my house, there's plenty of room to stow you away, and Joey Pike, too, who, I suppose, is art and part in the business: he always has a finger in every fool's pie"

All this was delivered in a bullying sort of tone, as if the good doctor had an especial commission to scold all the world; but Worrel knew him of old, and was well aware that underneath all his chiding there was a deep regard for himself, Harry Worrel, and the tenderest affection for the whole human race. He replied, however, "I cannot think of leaving my friend the Chevalier de Lunatico, who is a stranger in this country, and whom I have got into the same scrape with myself."

"Devil take him! he was your second, I suppose. I hate seconds worse than principals. However," he continued, turning to the chevalier, and feeling that irresistible communicativeness coming over him with which Mr. de Lunatico's presence always affected his companions, "nevertheless I like your phiz, old gentleman; so that if you will come down with my friend Harry here I shall be glad to see you, and will try to keep you all snug till the trial comes on."

The chevalier was in the act of making some little difficulty, and expressing a fear that they might crowd and incommode the good doctor, but Mr. Longshanks cut him short at once, exclaiming, "Well, well, come if you like it; don't come if you don't. As to room, there's plenty of room in my house; as to convenience, I shall be very happy to see ye. I never tell a lie, sir, for any man, and would not say I wished you to come if I did not. I hate the filthy falsehoods of society; so now let us go."

He added a few words in low tones to the people around, in regard to watching the body of the young sailor, calling a coroner's inquest, &c., and then led the way from the moor down towards the little village, which stood at the distance of about a quarter of a mile from the cottage. It consisted of, perhaps, fifty small houses, one moderate-sized one, and one large mansion within its own grounds. The middle-sized house was that of the vicar, the mansion belonged to our good friend the doctor, who it must be said, had been for about ten years of his life a surgeon in India, where he had amassed a large fortune by happy accidents, and came home to spend it for the benefit of his fellow creatures. As soon as he reached his house, and had ushered his guests into a large and fine library, he left them to visit the poor widow and give her help and consolation in his own peculiar way.

After conversing with the chevalier for a few minutes, and giving him a little insight into the character of his host, Worrel, too, left him, saying—"I am only fit to be alone, chevalier; I will go and seek the housekeeper and make her show me which is to be my room."

Joey Pike had by this time betaken himself to the kitchen, and the chevalier was left alone with the spirits of dead men in their books.

CHAPTER XII.

SOME OF THE NOTIONS OF MR. LONGSHANKS—AN ILLUSTRATION OF FREE WILL AND PREDESTINATION.

THE chevalier was not long alone, for, when excited, the proceedings of worthy Mr. Longshanks were generally as abrupt and rapid as his speech, and in about a quarter of an hour the creaking of his shoes—all shoes creak that have silver buckles in them—was heard indicating his approach to the door of the library. As he entered, he shot a quick glance round the room, as if his eyes were in search of Harry Worrel; but not finding him, he settled the whole matter in his own mind in a moment—for that said mind of his was a sword with a very quick and trenchant blade, and, like that of the greatest man of our own days, though it did not always strike in the right direction, whichever way it did strike, it was sure to go straight through.

"Ha!" he said, "Harry Worrel not here—gone to bed—best thing he could do. Of all the medicines man ever invented, my dear sir, there is not one worth a farthing, for mind and body, in comparison with the single one that nature gave us—sleep. It has been a bad day, indeed, a very bad day; battles, murders, and sudden death, with the addition of fire, make a pretty little slice out of the things we pray against. However, let us throw off care for half an hour before we go to bed—I never like to sleep upon the troubles of the day without an interval; one's intellectual stomach gets an indigestion. If I have a friend here, I talk to him about matters totally indifferent; if I am alone I take up a book—it is exercise after supper."

"I see," said the chevalier in a leading tone, "that you are very fond of moral philosophy; at least if I may judge by the books I find round me here."

"Yes, sir, yes," replied the surgeon, "it's a taste I got in India."

"Why I should think," said the chevalier, "from all I have heard of the luxury and sensuality of those parts of this globe, that it would not be exactly the place for acquiring a taste for mental recreations."

"For that very reason, for that very reason," replied Mr. Long-

shanks," "every thing there was material from morning to night. For three years I had nothing but mangoes and mullagatawney soup, dancing girls and boar spearing, cholera and cosmetics, curry and Hodson's pale ale. I got sick of it, sir; my soul was shut up in a box. I wrote home for Hobbes and Voltaire, Descartes and Pascal, Reid and Dugald Stewart, Condorcet and Hume, and laying them all down on the table I left them to run their heads together. It was a sharp encounter, sir, as ever you saw; but I found that if the materialists had the most wit, the spiritualists had the most sense. That brought me a good way over; but two things convinced me, which were, to find that the spiritualists were humble while the materialists were conceited, and that the former strove to be clear while the latter strove to be brilliant."

"Convinced you of what, may I ask?" said the chevalier; "a man of your sense I am sure would not let your being convinced of the goodness of the men, convince you of the goodness of their reasoning?"

"No, no; certainly not," answered Mr. Longshanks, "but it convinced me that the one set were seeking for truth even if they did not find it, and that the other were only seeking their own vanity even if they stumbled upon truth by chance. Now as I am much more likely when I want a fish to get it from a fisherman than a foxhunter, I was convinced that the best way to find truth was, to follow those who were really looking for it. Thus, sir, I went out to India, not an unbeliever but a sceptic, and I came back a very profound believer in every thing that man can know of things beyond his immediate senses."

"I am very happy to hear it, sir," said the chevalier, "for we, poor people in the moon——"

"Ho, ho! sir," cried Mr. Longshanks, "you come from the moon, do you? Sir, I am very happy to see you; but you were going to say——"

"That we poor people in the moon," continued the chevalier, "know something about those matters—we have schools for doubting, and in the capital city of St. Luke there is an annual distribution of medals and rewards for the greatest proficiency in scepticism. I myself had the honour last year of awarding the great gold medal to a young man who had arrived at the point of doubting whether his eyes were in the back or the front of his head. He very ingeniously proved that to those who were standing behind him his back was his front, and he demonstrated his own state of doubt upon the subject by running a fork into the back of his neck, thinking that he was carrying a piece of meat to his mouth."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Mr. Longshanks, "may I ask how the inferior medals were distributed?"

"Why I cannot remember all," said the chevalier, "but the small gold medal was bestowed upon an old gentleman who wrote an essay to show that there was a great probability of man having been originally a louse, produced spontaneously at first by the movement of matter, and gradually brought, in the course of many thousand years, to his present state by the agglomeration of atoms. For thirty years he went on breeding monkeys, and regularly rubbing them down every day with all sorts of animal atoms, in the hope that before he had done

with them they would make a move towards mankind; but alas! they remain monkeys still—though one raised his master into an ecstasy by eating his own tail, and another grew scabby and all his hair came off, which he considered as clear approximations to humanity, and expected them soon to speak. However, ere a week was over they ‘died and made no sign.’”

“There were silver medals, too, doubtless,” said Mr. Longshanks, better disposed, perhaps, to hear more of the universities of the moon than the reader may be.

“Oh, a great many,” replied the chevalier, “and leaden ones likewise; but the only essay that I at present recollect as having gained a silver medal was won by a young man who contended that it was mathematically impossible that there could be a God; for, said he, if there were such a being as God he must have made all the worlds square, not round, seeing that they would pack the better.”

“I should think he deserved a gold medal,” said Mr. Longshanks.

“No, no,” cried the chevalier, “not according to our rules and regulations. His was a positive proposition, and he had very nearly lost the medal altogether from the want of a sufficient portion of scepticism. If he had said that he doubted, &c. &c. he would have been better off.”

“Pray,” said the surgeon, “who is at the head of your sceptical university? He must be a well-known man of course?”

“He’s an old Greek,” said the chevalier, “of the name of Pyrrho; but he is nearly past his work, and would be very inefficient if it were not for a gentleman of great learning and activity of the name of Bayle, who is sub-rector. Besides these, however, we have amongst the professors one half of the writers you mentioned a few minutes ago, and a great many others. A gentleman of the name of Berkeley amongst the rest, who keeps the high school, and has convinced all the boys that there is no such thing as either birch or bottom. They cry manfully when they are flogged nevertheless.”

“I thought so, I thought so,” cried Mr. Longshanks; “and so, I fear, many others will cry when their theories are put to the proof in another world. But I can assure you, my dear sir, we have many as great fools here, many who deserve to be sent up to your planet for tricks not less extravagant.”

“I know it,” answered the chevalier, “and between you and I that is the cause of my coming. But pray let me hear a little how you got over all the difficulties that beset one in the world of metaphysics; the doctrines of innate and abstract ideas, the beneficence of the deity and existence of evil, God’s foreknowledge and mans’ freewill.”

“A wide subject, my dear chevalier, a wide subject,” replied the surgeon, “and you and I would both be dozing if I were to attempt to trace step by step the reasonings that convinced me. To prove the excellence of my own process would be long, to prove the folly of those of my opponents, however, is not so difficult. There are some of them that are more philologists than philosophers, some that are neither ore nor the other. The latter, not finding separate words to express distinct things, use the same term with half-a-dozen different significations; first puzzling themselves, and then puzzling their readers.

The former, when they don't find terms to express all the multifarious objects of thought, deny the existence of those objects themselves, as if facts depended upon languages. Thus, one man has denied that there is such a thing as mind, because the Anglo-Saxon does not bear it out. Another declares that to think is but to remember, because in the meagre barbarism of early tongues, the two operations were compounded together.

"As to fate and freewill," said the chevalier, "the foreknowledge of God, and our responsibility for our own actions, of course you are obliged to deal with such subjects in metaphysical inquiries; but for an ordinary man, methinks the best plan is, to establish as a first principle, that his own comprehension is limited; that God gives him to understand what is good for him to know, but has fixed a boundary to the powers of his mind as well as to the powers of his body; and to rest satisfied wherever he can prove the existence of a certain fact, even without being able to show its compatibility with another."

"Stay, stay," said Mr. Longshanks, "I'll show you fate and freewill in a moment."

He rang the bell sharply, and a man-servant appeared with the least possible loss of time. "Peter," said Mr. Longshanks, "there are some nuts on the dining-room sideboard. Bring them here, and a dry soup plate."

The servant disappeared, the soup plate, the nuts, and a pair of nut-crackers were soon brought. Mr. Longshanks cracked one which seemed to the chevalier to be a remarkably good nut indeed, but the surgeon threw it impatiently under the grate. Another and another succeeded, till at length he cracked one which was palpably rotten.

"This will do," said the moral philosopher, and carefully extracting a large lively maggot from the interior, he laid it down in the centre of the empty plate. Away wriggled the little white gentleman as hard as he could go towards the side of the plate, apparently not liking his new quarters at all, but whenever he came to the raised edge and lifted himself up it, down he rolled again into the plain part below. The chevalier and the surgeon looked down upon him as he made the attempt half a dozen times, and at length bursting into a laugh, Mr. Longshanks exclaimed, "There is man! See how he exercises his freewill, and see how fate brings it all to the same in the end. He can turn which way he pleases, he can wander hither or thither without any one asking him why he turns to the right or to the left; but the magic circle of circumstances is round him on every side, and no effort can overcome the insurmountable barrier placed by the will of God."

"A curious and excellent illustration surely," said the chevalier; but Mr. Longshanks was not disposed to take the compliment as it was.

"Not at all," he said, "not at all, if by the word curious you mean extraordinary. Such illustrations of divine truths are placed before us at every step, but we do not see them. From one thing we have a lesson of His power; from another, of His wisdom; from another, of His mercy. Here we learn God's delight in the beautiful; a step farther,

we find the beautiful blending with the useful and good. As our minds expand, we find that the beautiful itself, as well as the good, is but the varied expression of God's infinite excellence; that there is one universal harmony throughout the whole of nature, and that it but wants the elevation of our soul,—in other words, for us, as the Gospel teaches, to be perfect as God is perfect, in order to feel the mighty and entrancing music of the whole universe. He has spread out before us in his works, a book replete with every sort of wisdom, but man, blind man, will not read the pages where he might find happiness as well as virtue."

The chevalier mused. "Funny," he thought, "very funny, that a man filled with such ideas should illustrate his doctrines by a maggot. I can't help thinking he must be one of us."

Resolved, however, to take farther time to meditate over the matter, he expressed a sense of weariness and an inclination to retire to rest.

"I will lend you a nightcap," said the surgeon.

"I thank you, sir," replied Mr. de Lunatico, "but I never use one: I find it necessary to keep my head cool. But as my travelling portmanteau is unfortunately left at Mr. Longmore's, I should be glad if you would have the kindness to let one of the villagers fetch it early to-morrow morning."

"Why, sir, do you not know that Ivy-Hall is burnt?" exclaimed the surgeon. "I do not doubt in the least, that that old fool Longmore has set the place on fire himself with some of his stupid inventions. But at all events, you may look upon your portmanteau as a cinder—dust and ashes, sir. Dust and ashes 'is all remains of thee, portmanteau! 'tis what thou art, and what the proud shall be."

"I think not," replied the chevalier; "my portmanteau is fire-proof. It is made of moon calf-skin, which is nearly as good for keeping out light and heat as a tanned reviewer."

The chevalier's host stared, but Mr. de Lunatico nodded his head in his peculiarly impressive manner, saying, "Ay, sir, there are more things between heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy," and Mr. Longshanks not having considered the matter well, made no reply, but took up a candle, lighted it, and conducted the chevalier to his room.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOEY PIKE EATS AN IMPRUDENT SUPPER—A NEW COMPARISON FOR SLEEP—JOEY'S VISION!—HIS SOMNAMBULISTIC EXERCITATIONS—WHERE HE WENT TO, AND WHAT HE DID THERE—A DISCUSSION UPON THE CLOTHING OF GHOSTS—THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

It might be a curious case of casuistry to inquire whether it is more difficult to drive three pigs or one; for as every one who has tried the adventure must know, when you try to drive three pigs they will go all manner of ways, and one, but too often, will go no way at all. However that may be, the person who drives the three will soon find, that he must keep continually running from one to the other in order to get them on upon the same line; and thus it is with the three principal personages of this history, each of whom we are obliged to follow, in order to whip him to a par with the others. Joey Pike is the victim whom we must now undertake. Bred and brought up in the neighbourhood, he was as well acquainted with the penetralia of Mr. Longshank's house as any of the officiating priests, and plunging at once into the servants' hall, he was received with that profound respect which his character and acquirements deserved. We cannot pause to describe the infinite variety of attitudes in which he saluted the cook, received the courteous welcomings of the housemaid, noticed the kitchenmaid, bowed to the lackey; suffice it to say, that in each was grace indescribable, and in each the degree of condescension and familiarity was proportioned to the state and station of the person addressed. Neither can we pause in this place to repeat his sayings, culled from all the languages, which, like a rich hot-house, supplied the various exotic flowers of rhetoric to ornament his profuse eloquence. While the cook was thunderstruck with a volley of Italian, and the housemaid overwhelmed by a tender allusion in French, he even knocked down the groom with a mouthful of hard-dried German, and overawed the footman with a rotund phrase of Spanish picked up at Gibraltar. We must despatch the period of his stay in the lower regions as quickly as possible, nor even tell what were the accompaniments to a large griskin of roast pork which came hissing in for the servants' supper.

"Ha!" cried Joey, as soon as he beheld it, placing a chair for the cook with the dignified submissiveness of a lord chamberlain, and regarding with a sweet complaisant smile the brown expanse of crackling. "Ha! here is what my Portuguese friends call a *ros-beefey de porco*; and a most *exquis* supper it is before one lays one's head down upon one's *orrilyer*."

"They may call it what they like," said the groom, in a grumbling tone, "but I wish it had been a little more *ros-beefeyed* while they were about it."

As the groom said, so it proved, the pork was somewhat underdone, but in every other respect it was very good. Joey was powerfully hungry, and before he retired to rest for the night, certainly not less than a pound and a quarter of the savoury griskin had disappeared, under his own individual efforts.

Sleep, dear reader, has been compared to many things, and doubtless you think that all comparisons are exhausted. As this book, however, is altogether new—new in its character and object, conduct and circumstances—we must also have a new comparison for the drowsy dame. Sleep is like Timotheus!—How? where? when? in what manner? in which respect? under what aspect? in what point? and to what degree? How can sleep be like a fiddler? Why, ladies and gentlemen, the great musician, as the very first step after taking any disciples under his care and guidance, taught them to forget all they knew; and thus is sleep like Timotheus. And the very same lesson did she practise upon our dear friend, Joey Pike, as soon as his head had touched the pillow, sweeping away French and Italian, German and Spanish, and a great many other cobwebs, with the broom of forgetfulness, and leaving him there without thought, and well nigh without feeling, ready for her to play any vagary with that she might think fit. Joey, to say the truth, would have had no objection to this proceeding on the part of the goddess with the leaden mace, if she had but thought fit to stop there, leaving him in calm oblivion, like the fat weed on Lethe's shore, that the poet talks of. But Joey had eaten a pound and a quarter of pork: the pork was underdone, and Joey's dreams were troublous in no ordinary degree. Joey Pike had the nightmare then, but as all his fancies were peculiar, his nightmares were peculiar also. At first he thought that he was in a room with an immense goose pie perched upon a high table, and well pleased was he with the company of the sapient fowl, especially in its peculiar condition at that moment. He thought of livers and gizzards, and jellied sauce full of pepper. He contemplated with pleasure the image of a goose's head formed of crust, which surmounted the whole dish, and he seemed to snuff the odour, though it was through the olfactories of imagination. Gradually, however, the goose pie increased in volume; the crusty image nodded vast and large as the helmet of Otranto, the rim of the dish became imminent, each nick in the paste grew colossal, the brown stains on the porcelain seemed magnified by a gas microscope, the table was crushed under its weight, the room grew too narrow to hold it; larger and larger, vaster and more vast, this ambitious pie, bent upon its own personal aggrandizement like Napoleon Bonaparte, swallowed up all minor things around, till poor Joey Pike, in mortal terror, saw it bulging out towards him, and looked round, but looked round in vain for door or window by which to make his escape. Between him and the entrance extended the vast pie, and nothing but a faint glimmering of light from the window

could be seen over the crust as it towered towards the ceiling. He shrunk back against the wall, he rushed into the corner, but still the terrible pie increased, approaching him inch by inch, and possessing within itself the powers of infinite expansion. It came nearer and nearer—he felt it touching against his nose, pressing against his stomach, treading upon his toes; till mortal nature would bear no more, and with a loud groan he woke.

For a minute or two he lay actually shaking, and exclaiming “Corpo de Bacco!” which the reader will admit was a very appropriate ejaculation. A little reflection, however, calmed him completely, and as he recollected all the particulars of his dream, he determined to write it down and send it to *Blackwood's Magazine*. He spent a few minutes in arranging it into a regular narrative; but composing books in the dark is a drowsy occupation, and ere he had turned many periods Joey was asleep again. His pork, however, was not so quiescent, and remained as firm and as heavy as ever upon his stomach. But this time it produced a different effect: after lying for about half an hour in what seemed a deep strong sleep, Joey Pike moved a leg and an arm, then raised himself and got up. Pray, reader, remark, I say he got up, I don't say he woke. Without bestowing the necessary pains upon his apparel he made his way straight to the door, and

“Seemed to find his way without his eyes,
For out of doors he went without their help.”

That is to say, in plain prose, he opened the door of his room, descended the staircase, unchained, unlocked, unbolted the door of the house, and walked quietly out upon the neat gravel walk, being all this time in a state much nearer approaching to nudity than was at all convenient or respectable. Had any of the members of the society for the suppression of vice met him in that state, poor Joey would have been very likely to have, what a thief with whom I have the honour of being acquainted calls, a month's walk round a rolling-pin; by which I take it he means a month at the tread-mill. Joey, however, was fortunate: first, in being sound asleep all the time, and thus being unconscious of the predicament in which he placed himself; and secondly, in not meeting a single soul as he walked quietly up towards the moor. The world, however, was unfortunate; for certainly it would have been a glorious sight to see our good friend Joey advancing upon tiptoes, with all the graces of an Apollo in a cutty sark, throwing himself into all manner of attitudes, and doubtless all the while thinking himself, in the innermost parts of his sleeping soul, fit for a model for any statuary. The world in general, however, was denied the treat; and it was reserved for one who neither deserved, appreciated, nor understood it.

On walked Joey quietly till he reached the cottage of poor widow Bain. What it was impelled him heaven only knows: he might be brought there by some reminiscence of the events of the night troubling the quiet march of sleep; he might be led by the hand of his good genius for his own salvation, for great and important were the results of that walk to our friend Joey Pike.

Without the slightest pause or hesitation he approached, as I have said, the door, put his hand upon the latch, opened, and went in. There was a light within, and, moreover, an old woman, left to watch the dead body, according to the directions which had been given by Mr. Longshanks. Like most other watchers, she was sound asleep; and had Joey Pike come thither with the intention of snatching the body, or any thing else, he would have had no difficulty in accomplishing his purpose. As we have shown, however, poor Joey was asleep too; but now a change came over him. Whether it was that his sleep came to its predestined conclusion, or that the rays of light, suddenly striking upon the door of the retina gained admission into the house and woke the tenant, who shall say? Suddenly, Joey Pike was roused from his sleep, and, like our wicked first parents in Paradise, knew that he was naked. He gazed round him for an instant in wonder and astonishment, not forgetting, even in that moment of surprise, the graces with which nature had so plentifully endowed him. Of him at that moment it might well be said:

“So stands the statue that enchants the world.”

There he was, however, in the middle of the cottage-floor with nothing upon him but his shirt! There could be no doubt of the fact, although in other respects he had some doubts of his existence altogether. A few moments' reflection brought various forgotten matters back to his mind. “*Diantre!*” cried Joey, “I have been walking in my sleep again! I am *la Somnambula!*—I had better get out of this, however, *sans delay*, for the old woman is as sound as a roach. *Quel bonhoor!*”

Thus saying, and on tiptoes, Joey reapproached the door, which, for some reason to himself unknown, he had carefully shut. Lifting the latch without the slightest noise, he drew back the door in the same silent manner, and was issuing out once more in the open air, with the view of making the best of his way back to the house of Mr. Longshanks, when suddenly, with direful consternation, he beheld standing close to the cottage, and raising his right hand towards the thatch, the junction between which and the wall could be very well reached, the figure of a stout, broadset man. If Joey Pike was confounded and alarmed, the stranger was ten times more so.

What he came there for matters not at present, but having heard of the death of the widow's son, the only conclusion he could come to, on seeing a naked figure with a scanty shirt issue silently, and even noiselessly, forth from the cottage, was, that he beheld William Bain's ghost. I say naturally, because, had we time and space to discuss the question, I would undertake to prove to the very most ghost-learned of all my readers that a scanty shirt, such as Joey Pike had on at that moment, is much more appropriate, and to be expected in a ghost, than the long white garments with which we generally invest them; ay, and the scantier the better. There's both religion and philosophy in it, sir; for while philosophy asks why the deuce a ghost should wrap itself up in a winding-sheet, religion says, that as we brought nothing into the world with us, so shall we take nothing out with us—no, not even so much as a silk pocket handkerchief; and therefore, as I have said,

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The Somnambulist.

the less clothes a ghost has on the better. The gentleman whom Joey encountered, however, stopped neither to inquire nor to argue, but took to his heels at once, and ran as if all the bulls in the parish were after him. Joey, for his part, stood quite still in bewildered uncertainty: at first proposing to retreat into the cottage; but the next moment, like a great general as he was, taking advantage of the unexpected panic of his adversary, he advanced, and pushing on, gained Mr. Longshank's house, carefully shut the door, felt his way up stairs, and entered the garret which had been assigned him as a place of repose. There he crept under the bed-clothes, and being, as the reader knows, a philosopher, he set at work at once to do what every man should do, and inquire into the secret causes of his own proceedings. A certain weight upon his chest taught him at once to unravel the heart of the mystery, and laying his hand upon his stomach, he sighed forth "*Quel porco!*"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHEVALIER RECOVERS HIS PORTMANTEAU—MR. LONMORE LIKE A GREAT STATESMAN DEVOURS HIS OPINIONS—THE CHARITY OF OUR DEAR FRIENDS—JOEY PIKE CUTS AN UNPLEASANT ACQUAINTANCE—FINDS A FRIEND IN NEED AND MAKES HIS APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE.

THE portmanteau of the chevalier arrived at the house of Mr. Longshanks towards the hour of eight in the morning, and although Mr. de Lunatico was far more thoroughly convinced of its fire-resisting properties than any of the innumerable patentees of those fire-proof safes and boxes in which valuable title-deeds and other papers are annually burnt to very excellent tinder, it was a very great relief to his mind to see it in such a high state of preservation. On cross questioning the bulky peasant who carried it up to his room, he found that labourers had been engaged during the whole morning, from the first dawn of light, in digging amongst the ruins "for the bodies."

"For the bodies!" exclaimed the chevalier; "I thought there was but one who had perished. On my word," he continued, muttering to himself, "I think I shall summons the whole nation for building themselves houses of all the most inflammable substances they can find, when they have plenty of stone and plenty of iron, if they choose to make use of it. Pray, my good friend, with all their digging, what have they found besides my portmanteau?"

"Lawk-a-daisy, sir!" replied the man; "find? Why they've found a couple of dead cats, and lots of roasted rats, and the skin of a long

beast that they call an alligation, and pots enough to set up a china-shop, and——”

“ Why I should have thought all such things must be destroyed,” cried the chevalier, “ in such a fire as that.”

“ Ay, and so they would too, sir,” replied the man ; “ but you see, when the west wall fell out, the roof tumbled in ; that is to say, it didn’t exactly tumble, but it slipped down whole enough, one side coming down with a rattle, but the other hitching upon the beams of one of the bed-rooms so as to lie slanting, like—for all the world like the penthouse of a cobbler’s shop, and underneath that there was a lot of all kinds of rubbish, and this here portmanteau amongst the rest.”

“ Rubbish !” said the chevalier, thinking of his invaluable stock—his credentials and all the rest. “ But, tell me, have they found the body of the young lady—poor thing ?” and his voice shook a little as he spoke, perhaps from a slight cold which he had caught in all his peregrinations of the preceding day.

“ No,” replied the peasant ; “ not a body did they find, for every thing that wasn’t under that part of the roof was burnt to a cinder.”

Mr. de Lunatico questioned his companion no farther, but gave him a piece of silver for his pains, and being, as we have shown upon more than one occasion, of a tender and compassionate disposition, he determined forthwith to visit Mr. Longmore, and endeavour to console him for the terrible loss he had sustained. On seeking for Worrel, in order to inquire after his health, he found that his young friend was already up and out, and after having breakfasted with Mr. Longshanks with whom he held a short but very interesting conversation, which I cannot pause to repeat, he issued forth on foot with Joey Pike as his guide. The latter indeed went with fear and trembling, but having explained to his indulgent lord what he termed his *spavento*, with the deprecatory declaration that, if it was his will, he would go with him to death, the chevalier reassured him by saying that he would only take him to the top of the hill over which he had enjoyed such a pleasant walk with Worrel and poor Laura Longmore.

As soon as the chevalier saw his way clear before him he dismissed his conductor, and after various inquiries in regard to Mr. Longmore’s present place of sojourn, he was in the space of about a quarter of an hour seated comfortably in an arm-chair in the King’s Head inn, to which the old philosopher had betaken himself. Poor Mr. Longmore was a very changed and chapfallen man since the period when the chevalier had first beheld him in the pride of health, prosperity, and astronomical instruments. He was now left alone, not “ with his glory” but with a pair of black silk breeches, and instead of having his “ martial cloak around him” he had nothing to wrap himself in but a shawl dressing-gown. His hair was unpowdered, his pigtail was crooked and partly singed, and his bald crown had lost the lustre with which it used to shine and looked dull and depressed. Well pleased was he, however, to see the chevalier, and pressed his hand tenderly with tears in his eyes.

“ Ah, my dear friend !” he said, “ ah, my dear friend, this is a ter-

rible affair, and it will shorten my life by at least fifty years. It is such things as these that bring mortality into the world: otherwise there is no reason why man with proper precaution might not live for ever. My beautiful instruments are all gone, and my daughter, my dear child, the light and solace of my life, she is lost also!"

"There is matter of comfort in all things, my good sir," said the chevalier; "and although it may be a painful consolation, yet you should remember all the pains and inconveniences which might have occurred to you had your daughter lived. It was quite evident to me that she had made up her mind to marry her cousin Worrel, and——"

"She might have married any one that she liked," cried the old gentleman impatiently. "What a straw in the balance! to talk of her marrying this man or that, when she is dead—burnt to death—lost to me for ever!"

"Why," exclaimed the chevalier in considerable astonishment, "I have heard you declare that you would rather see her dead a thousand times than marry any one else but Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse!"

"Nonsense, nonsense!" cried Mr. Longmore; "every body talks in that way, but it means nothing. No man in this world ever says what he means, my good chevalier, especially to a daughter about her marriage. We of course try to drive her into the arms of the man we like best; but if she flies into the arms of him she likes best herself, why we can't help it you know. Fathers' curses, and all that, unless with great fools or great blackguards, do not hold out very long against entreaties and repentance."

"Or is it," said the chevalier, in a peculiarly solemn manner, "that we ill-treat the living and then regret the dead; that we fancy we should have relented when the time for gentleness is past, but that we should in reality have been as harsh as ever if the opportunity had been afforded us? God, very often, Mr. Longmore, interposes between ourselves and our rash purposes, and we believe we should not have executed them only when he has taken from us the power of doing so."

"I declare, so help me heaven," cried Mr. Longmore with the tears in his eyes, "that if my poor daughter were in life she should marry whomsoever she pleased, were it a chimney-sweep out of the street! I should not have been so hard as you think, my friend, I should not indeed."

"Well," said the chevalier, "I must not press a suffering man, Mr. Longmore, but pray recollect for the future not to make rash denunciations lest heaven take you at your word. But now to other matters, it is my intention to go to the capital of this great country, and I think that it might do you good too, Mr. Longmore, if you could accompany me. New objects and new pursuits are like a group of children that I saw just now tugging an old man from his seat. They withdraw the mind kindly but forcibly, from the things it rests on."

"No, my dear sir, no!" said Mr. Longmore, "I can't go to London just at present. It's a filthy hole, sir, London: a place where one

rogue has set down his house next to another, for the better opportunity of cheating him ; a wilderness of brick and mortar as some one has called it ; a solitude of human beings ; a hive of wasps not bees, where every one has a sting and no honey. It is a foul place, sir, a foul place, with such a stench and steam of human vice rising up from it incessantly day and night that they could not find a spot in the whole place to plant an observatory in, and so they were obliged to fix it at Greenwich. However, my dear friend, I know a number of people there, and as you wish to see all classes of the community, I will take care that you have the opportunity. In the course of the afternoon I shall write you letters to a number of different people in the capital. You shall have them to physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, attorneys, barristers, judges, tradesmen, merchants, aldermen candidates, members of parliament, statesmen, clerks, councillors, ministers : you shall have a letter to the Lord Mayor of London and the first Lord of the Treasury, and I will write in such terms to all that they shall give you as much information as possible."

"I will take care of that," said the chevalier, in a manner which Mr. Longmore thought somewhat conceited, though, as the reader well knows, the foundation of his self-sufficiency lay in his portmanteau ; and after having repeated his thanks to Mr. Longmore, and suggested a few little topics of consolation in his own peculiar manner, the chevalier made his bow and retired, still unable to make up his mind as to whether the first friend he had made on earth was really qualified for a billet to the moon or not.

Taking his way back towards the house of Mr. Longshanks, our worthy friend was led by curiosity to pass by the ruins of Ivy Hall. A fine dry gravelly road led up from the little town to the *ci-devant* dwelling of the old philosopher, and the chevalier for the first time enjoyed the spectacle of a really English promenade ; for, as may be well supposed by any one who knows the true character of the people, the news of the burning of Mr. Longmore's house, enhanced as it was by the report of his daughter having perished in the flames, spread universal hilarity and satisfaction amongst the inhabitants of the little town. There had not been such a thing as a fire in the neighbourhood for half a century, and, with the exception of a murder or two, a few cases of burglary, a brewer being boiled in one of the coppers, a Swiss giantess, Wombwell's menagerie, and a troop of equestrians, the good towns-people had not had any thing to amuse themselves with, and to wonder at, for many a long year. All the ladies in the town felt actually obliged to Mr. Longmore for setting his house on fire ; and there they went along the road, in groups of twos, threes, and fours, dressed in all the finery they could get up for the occasion, and either laughing, talking, or looking solemn, according to the peculiar sort of affectation of each. Some of the light-hearted were joking with each other gaily, finding nothing in the whole business but an excuse for a holiday ; others were conversing gravely over the events of the fire, and with all the uncharitableness of self importance were expressing serious doubts as to whether it would not prove a case of arson. One man said that he knew the house and

all that it contained to be insured to at least double its value (it was not insured at all); another rejoined that old Longmore was said to be rich, but he always entertained many doubts of the fact. He had heard it whispered, too, that his property was as deeply mortgaged as it could bear. Another said it was no wonder, when one considered the mint of money that he had spent upon fooleries of all kinds—observatories, and telescopes, and granite columns, and transit instruments, and the Lord knows what besides. But just at that moment a fourth stepped up to the party who had been enjoying this pleasant discussion, and informed them in a low tone that he had just heard that a commission was about to be issued, to inquire into the sanity of Mr. Longmore. He had no doubt, he added, that a statute of lunacy would be the result.

“Ho, ho!” said the chevalier, who happened to be near; “this is something in my way;” and approaching with his usual easy and unconstrained air, he joined the party, and made one in the conversation, without exciting the slightest wonder at his addressing them, although a stranger.

“Pray, sir,” he said, addressing the first, “may I ask what makes you think that Mr. Longmore’s house and its contents were insured for more than the value?”

The other laughed, and under the influence of the chevalier’s peculiar powers, drew him aside, saying, “I don’t really know any thing about the matter, but I take it for granted the house is insured; and, in that case, old Longmore’s too sharp a fellow not to put the insurance at the highest sum he can get.”

The chevalier then turned to another, who had hinted at Longmore’s poverty, and had insinuated a mortgage—“Pray, sir, may I ask,” he said, “what it is that makes you doubt Mr. Longmore’s wealth?”

“Why,” cried the gentleman, likewise drawing him aside that the rest might not hear, “the truth is, he lent me fifty pounds three or four months ago, and did not take an acknowledgment. Now, you know a man of that kind can’t be rich long.”

The chevalier discovered in the same manner that the personage who did not wonder that Mr. Longmore was reported to be impoverished, on account of the foolish way in which he spent his money, was a lawyer in a tolerable way of business, who, having a wife and family, kept a faithless little strumpet in a back street of the town, played whist at guinea points, and had two or three natural children besides. The gentleman who was so bent upon a commission of lunacy had a hereditary taint of insanity in his family, and every two or three years established his legitimate descent from mad ancestors in the most unequivocal manner. A very short conversation with him justified Mr. de Lunatico in presenting him with a billet for the moon; and then turning to the others, he said, “I believe in common fairness, gentlemen, I ought to give you the same invitation; for I think that you all admit that whatever may be his eccentricities, Mr. Longmore is an excellent and amiable man, whose whole conduct towards his neighbours ought to conciliate the regard and affection of all rational men, and yet you evidently show that you entertain towards him feelings exactly the reverse of those

which his conduct ought to inspire in reasonable beings, which can hardly proceed from any thing but a lunatic tendency in your minds. I have therefore many doubts whether I ought not to consider you as subjects of the moon, and summons you accordingly."

"If you do that," replied one, "you may summon the whole world; for a great philosopher has said that we always find some cause for satisfaction in the misfortunes of our best friends, a maxim you may see exemplified every day."

"The gentleman you speak of," said the chevalier, "has been up in our sphere a long time. He was considered as a wit, I find, down here; but we have put him into the incurable ward of the hospitals for *soi-disant philosophes*—a term used amongst us to signify a particular species of troublesome idiot. I do not know what you call them down here below."

"The same, the same," said the last speaker. "The two languages seem to be very much alike."

The chevalier then turned to a group of ladies who, with green and lilac ribands, a great deal of lace and other finery, were wending their way up towards the scene of the fire, enjoying to their hearts' content the malice of pity. Poor little Laura Longmore was the great object of their attack. One declared that she could cry to think of the poor girl being cut off in the midst of her vanity and folly. Another said that perhaps, after all, it was as well for her; for there was no doubt she was going to marry Mr. Fitzurse, while she was in love with Mr. Worrel, and all the world knew what would come of that. Another cried, "marry Mr. Fitzurse, indeed! No chance of that: Mr. Fitzurse was not a marrying man. All that he wanted was, to play the fool with the girl. If he had married, he would have married somebody in a better station of life, not such an upstart chit as that. What she wondered at was that Mr. Longmore could be such an ass as to suffer it. She was very sorry for her, indeed, poor thing; and considered it a horrible death to be burnt alive; but after all, if Laura had lived, nothing could have come of it but an action for breach of promise of marriage—and perhaps a baby." It was a young unmarried lady of forty-three, and rather thin, who spoke.

I have said that the chevalier was approaching this party, but he never executed his intention of taking part in their conversation. The chevalier needs no defence; for every man has a right to change his mind each five minutes; indeed, he has seldom any right to keep it. Although resolution is a good thing in its way, yet any one who sees

"How chances mock,
And changes fill the cup of alteration
With divers liquors,"

must be convinced that a man's purposes, even if they are formed upon good motives at first, which is very seldom the case, must change with changing circumstances. The cause of the chevalier's abandoning his intention was twofold. First, a stage coach was coming up pulled

along by four bright thoroughbred, cat-like bays, which whirled it forward as if it had been drawn by a string of tigers, and most assuredly it would have knocked our respectable friend down, and ran over him, if he had attempted to take the direction which he had at first proposed. In the second place, there was a sudden hubbub amongst the string of people going up to see the ruins of Mr. Longmore's house which attracted Mr. de Lunatico's attention, and in which he soon found himself concerned. The first thing he saw was a great movement amongst the people at the top of the hill; and the next moment, he beheld Joey Pike with the agility of a deer threading the mazes of the people on his bounding tiptoes, and approaching with a rapidity which could proceed from nothing but fear. Even when hurled along, however, like an arrow from a bow, Joey's distinctive grace and politeness did not abandon him. He twisted round each fat dowager; he darted about to avoid running against each pretty lady; if he touched a furbelow or discomposed a sleeve, he exclaimed in the sweetest tone possible, "*Scuzy*;" and if he trod upon a toe, he laid his hand upon his heart and sighed forth, "*Pardong*."

In the meanwhile, distanced by about fifty yards, came rolling down a fat heavy-looking man, with a face like one of the large masks at the door of a masquerade warehouse, with a low-crowned, flat-brimmed hat, and with a yellow waistcoat bisected by an immense row of brass buttons, covering the fair rotundity of his justice-like stomach. Panting, puffing, blowing, "larding the lean earth as he went along," he gave chase to Joey Pike, running against every body, begging pardon of nobody, and endeavouring to shout forth "stop him, stop him," but frustrated in his efforts so to do, by a certain inopportune hoarseness, which rendered the sound produced as inarticulate as the whistling of the wind through a keyhole.

For once, grace and politeness met their due reward—every one made way for Joey, nobody budged a step for his pursuer; and indeed, fierce and angry were the glances shot at him as he jostled the world while he passed along. One gentleman d——d him, another cursed him, and another raised his stick to knock him down, while a little boy, whom he thrust forcibly out of his way, applied in the most classical manner possible, as is proved by Pompeii, the tip of the thumb on his left hand to the apex of his nose, and, extending the fourth finger, connected the point thereof with the thumb of the right, whereat the fat man was wroth, and shook his fist.

As soon as Joey saw the chevalier he dropped on one knee before him, threw back his graceful head and extended his right hand, evidently with the view of addressing to him some supplication; but just at that instant, his eyes lighted on the stage coach, and he saw an old friend from the village of Outrun on the box, in the person of the coachman. That gentleman also saw him and his distress; he gathered up his tits in a moment, bringing by a magical process, their heads in and their haunches out, and with a sudden jerk of his thumb over his left shoulder, he indicated to the fugitive the proceeding he was to adopt. In an instant, Joey was on his feet again, and in another

instant, on the top of the coach. Crack went the whip, out went the sixteen legs of the horses, like those of a great spider darting at a fly, round went the wheels, and on went the coach. The fat man shook both his fists, flashed fire from both his eyes, and whistled out, "stop, stop," adding, when he found himself not attended to, some imprecations of a character not very chaste nor very reverent. The coachman whirled his whip gracefully round his head, and suddenly the lash found its way round to the posteriors of his interpellator, while at the same time, the Jehu screwing up his eye into the smallest possible space demanded in a sweet tone, "who are you ;" and also inquired of the gentleman whether his mother knew he was out, but without waiting for a reply to either questions, and galloping his horses up the hill as fast as they could go.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SHORTEST CHAPTER IN THE BOOK—THE ONE THAT LOVED HIM—THE LAST SCENE OF A TRAGEDY.

"The shadows dance upon the wall
 By the still dancing fire-flame made ;
 And now they slumber, moveless all !
 And now they melt to one deep shade !"

THE poet's description was very applicable to a certain room in Outrun Castle on the morning which witnessed the duel between Harry Worrel and the Honourable Frederick Augustus Fitzurse. The latter-named gentleman having been got out of his bed with considerable difficulty about half-past three in the morning, had been dressed by candle light, and by candle light had been primed with the liquors judged necessary to carry him through the business of the day. His room had remained with the windows closed as if he were sleeping on to his usual hour, and the housemaid, who had been properly kept in the dark with regard to the proceedings about to take place, had not, of course, ventured to disturb the sanctity of his repose. Thus the only living things in the room during his absence were a few coals which had been thrown upon the fire by Tom Hamilton to keep him warm while dressing, which flickered and flared, casting fitful and tremulous gleams upon the tumbled bed, and the slippers and dressing gown cast down, and the table with its array of silver-covered bottles and pots, razors, brushes, combs, and boxes of pills. Thus the matter continued for the

space of an hour or somewhat more; then came a terrible ringing at the great bell of the house, and then an immense deal of bustle and confusion in the hall below and upon the staircase. It was the bustle of feet and not of tongues—for very few words were spoken and those in a low tone—and at length the door of the room opened, and four or five men made their way slowly in, carrying upon a cottage door the form of the heir of Outrun Castle. Slowly approaching the bed they laid him down upon it, and slipped the machine on which they bore him from underneath him—with no great ceremony, indeed, but not without that sort of solemn silence which the presence of death generally produces.

The old viscount himself, with his red nightcap and his redder face, followed the bearers of his son and took a look at him as he lay, while Tom Hamilton gazed over the peer's shoulder with feelings much less pleasant than he liked to express. The peer was rapid in making up his mind to most things: he was a man of action rather than words, and his oration over his son's body was not a long one.

"D——n me, he's done for him," said the viscount, after staring in at the foot curtains of the bed for about thirty seconds. "What devilish good shots all those Worrels are. Well, Freddy my boy, I'll give them a touch of limbo for your sake, even if we can't get them hanged.—I say, Tom, they ought to hang Worrel; ought they not?—Curse him he shot the boy when he was drunk!"

"But, my dear lord," said Tom Hamilton, "you know you would——"

"Curse it hold your tongue," cried the viscount; "never mind what I would! At all events we'll send after them and have them into jail. Come away, Tom, come away, and let us put the dogs upon the scent; then we'll have a cutlet and a pint of Madeira by way of consolation."

Thus saying he quitted the room, and one by one the men who had carried the body in followed the noble lord out—doubtless, with the purpose of consoling themselves after his fashion. The door was closed by the last of them, and the fire went on flickering round the room as if nothing had been the matter. Who is it that loves or mourns for the wicked?

The room had been closed for about a quarter of an hour; the news of what had occurred had run through the household; the servants' hall was flowing with ale, and the peer's breakfast-room with Madeira, when the handle of the lock in the chamber of death turned, the door gently opened, and a young girl, in the dress of a housemaid entered with a noiseless step, and, slow and trembling, approached the side of the bed. She came evidently to take a last look of the dead body of her young master. What had been the connexion between them matters not. He was debauched, licentious, unfaithful, coarse; it was impossible that he could treat any woman well—it was scarcely possible that he could do aught but injure, betray, insult, and tyrannise over any one who was in his power; but yet it was clear that there was one heart at least that loved him. The poor girl was a pretty creature enough, with a countenance of no great sense and much timidity, and her whole frame was agitated, although, as yet, her eyes were tearless. When she had come

close to the bed, however, and saw the pale face and the blood that dabbled it, the tears welled over from her eyes and rolled silently down her cheeks. Then kneeling down by the side of the bed, she murmured, "God forgive you and me!" and stretching out her arm, she took the hand that was next to her and pressed her lips upon it.

The moment that she had done so she started up, saying to herself in a low voice and with a look of utter astonishment, "I never knew that a dead man's hand was warm!"

After thus speaking, she stood and gazed for an instant or two with a troubled and doubtful look, and then thrust her hand under her young master's waistcoat. The agitation of her countenance became extreme, but a gleam of joy mingled with the troubled emotions that crossed it, like the rays of sunshine struggling with the clouds of a stormy sky. She then drew her hand suddenly back and gazed again, and then bent down her head till the curls of her hair fell upon his forehead, and her cheek almost touched his lips, while her eye fixed vacantly upon the other side of the room, gazing with eager intensity at nothing. The next instant she cried, "It is his breath!" and then giving a loud and piercing cry, she rushed to the door and thence to the top of the stairs, where she uttered shriek after shriek, till the whole household came running to know what was the matter. It seemed as if the poor girl had lost all power to do any thing but scream, for to the first questions addressed to her such was her only reply; but, as they demanded angrily and eagerly, "What ails you, Jane? what ails you?" she stamped her foot impatiently, exclaiming, "He is not dead! he breathes!" and down she fell herself as pale, or paler, than him whom she had just left.

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Illustration of the scene.

CHAPTER XVI.

FITZURSE REDIVIVUS—THE CORPSE DISCOVERS THE CAUSE OF HIS AILMENT—
THE PEER HITS UPON A PLAN—JERRY TRIPE SAILS UNDER SEALED ORDERS—
THE SERVANTS SUSPECT THEIR LORD OF CEREBRAL DISTURBANCE—A SECOND
SCENE OUT OF TOM THUMB.

SEVERAL minutes elapsed before the various personages who had been collected together by the violent screaming of poor Jane, which we have described in the last chapter, seemed to comprehend the cause of her agitation or the meaning of her words. The peer d——d her twice, and vowed the girl was mad. Tom Hamilton looked on her with real compassion, springing from a variety of causes; Jerry Tripe pulled out of his pocket one of the undischarged brandy bottles, and one of the maids took out a pair of scissors to cut her stay lace.

But Jane, with a last faint effort, cried, "Let me alone! There! there! he is not dead I tell you!" and she pointed with her hand in the direction of Mr. Fitzurse's room.

What was the poor girl's meaning, now seemed to strike every one in a moment; and the opening of their understandings made them, as usual, open their eyes and mouths also.

There were at this time five persons round her—the peer, Tom Hamilton, a maid, Jerry Tripe, and a footman; but all left poor Jane where she was, and rushed into Mr. Fitzurse's room. The peer caught hold of his son's hand—though the fingers were cold, the palm was warm. Tom Hamilton felt his heart: it beat, though but faintly. That was enough for the viscount, however, who seized a ewer of water and dashed it at once over his son's face. The effect was instantaneous: he gave a great gasp and raised himself upon his two elbows, while the old man, taking off his red velvet nightcap, waved it round and round in the air, exclaiming, "Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

But Mr. Fitzurse sank back again, and though he opened his eyes, seemed bewildered, and scarce half alive.

"What is the matter?" said he in a faint voice. "What brings you all here? I've got a devil of a headache. It's all that cursed spinach that I ate last night. Hang me, if ever I eat any vegetables again; they always make my head ache."

"Send for a surgeon," cried the peer. "See what it is to have a hard head! though, by jingo, I did not know that the fellow had got a skull that would turn a pistol-ball. Send for a surgeon, I say!"

"Stay, stay, my lord," said Tom Hamilton; "we may all look foolish, if we don't mind. I've a notion that he cut his forehead on a stone as he fell. It seemed to me, at the time, that Worrell's pistol was not aimed at him. Let's see how deep the wound is before we bring a surgeon to laugh at us."

"Hold," cried the peer; "every one of you stay here. I won't have a word of this mentioned. I have a plan in my head. If any one of you mention that he's come to life again, I'll discharge him without warning. Here, Nelly Thomson, get me a bodkin. Tom Hamilton, there's a good fellow, wipe his face with that towel."

"Why, what a slop you have made," said Mr. Fitzurse, beginning to feel cold and uncomfortable. "I wonder what the deuce you are all about."

Nobody took any pains to explain the circumstances; but Mr. Fitzurse's face was wiped, the wound in his forehead was probed with a bodkin, and found to be a little triangular hole of no depth, evidently cut by his fall upon a stone. Gradually, however, the recollection of having been a principal in a duel, of being fired at and suddenly losing all consciousness, returned, though faint and indistinctly; and the first effect upon the frame of Mr. Fitzurse was a violent fit of trembling, as if the whole matter were to be done over again. Very soon happier thoughts arose: it was something to have fought a duel, and to have his name put in the newspapers, with "Affair of Honour" before it. It would establish for him the character of a man of courage for the rest of his life; and he was beginning to grin with satisfaction at the thought, when his father held up his finger solemnly, as a signal that he was going to be oracular.

"Hush, hush, every one of you!" he cried. "I have a plan in my head for punishing all those fellows, and getting all that we want. First of all, Freddy, you are to be dead. Do you hear, all of you? He is to be dead; and if any one says a word about his being living, I'll horsewhip him first, and discharge him afterwards. Mind that: I'm a man of my word, you know. Where's the girl Jane? she can't be fainting at the top of the stairs all this time."

"No, my lord, I'm here," cried the timid voice of the poor housemaid, through a chink of the door.

"Jane," cried the peer, "come in. You are not to say a word about his being living, do you hear. How the devil you chanced to find it out I don't know; but, however, he must confine himself strictly to his own room, and you shall have the pleasure of bringing him up his food, Jane, on account of the good news you gave us."

Poor Jane looked as if it would be a pleasure indeed, but she said not a word; for, to tell the truth, the tears were very near her eyes, and she was afraid of stirring the water for fear of its running over. All the other servants swore in the most solemn manner to keep the secret, and what is still better, they really intended to do so; for they knew that their good lord, who was somewhat choleric withal, was a very likely man indeed to execute his threat, or even worse. All this being settled, the peer took Jerry Tripe on one side, and entered with him into secret conclave. They had a long and eager discussion, and sundry of the servants and dependants were sent for from time to time, questions were put to them, persons were despatched hither and thither through the country, and several hours were occupied in various evolutions difficult to account for. At length, however, towards evening,

two constables arrived, five stout men-servants, all covered with smock frocks, were marshalled in the hall, and, under the leading and guidance of Mr. Jeremy Tripe, they set out across the country towards nightfall. For a couple of hours after their departure the peer seemed easy and cheerful: he went up to his son's room, had a small turbot and lobster sauce a broiled fowl with mushrooms a sweetbread done brown and a leg of lamb carried up by the hands of Jane, while he himself, with a decanter in each hand and a bottle of champagne under his arm, provided the liquid which was to moisten the solid mass prepared for his consumption. There he and the corpse ate and drank, and were merry; for the good strong wine speedily cleared away the headache under which the worthy Mr. Fitzurse had been labouring during the whole day. But towards nine or ten o'clock the peer became fidgetty again, looked at his watch every five minutes, and all the servants who did not know the resuscitation of the admirable Mr. Henry Frederick Augustus, set their lord down for insane when they found him eating and drinking in his dead son's room, and shouting inquiries from the top of the stairs to the bottom as to whether Jerry Tripe had yet returned. Suddenly, however, his lordship seemed to recollect something, and calling for maids and housekeepers, made them prepare the best visitor's room, which was an old-fashioned state apartment of the reign of Charles II. The furniture was dusted, mattresses, sheets and blankets, were put upon the bed, an immense fire of wood was piled up in the capacious hearth, and a pair of wax lights set down upon the toilet table.

"Run you, Jane and Nelly Thomson," cried the peer, "run to my sister's room—what is called the young lady's room I mean—and bring out the middle one of the three trunks that you will find in the large cupboard. We shall get night dresses enough in that I dare say."

The two girls immediately fulfilled his command, and from a room which had been five-and-twenty years untenanted, they brought forth a large dusty trunk, with two straps attached to either handle, giving reason to suppose that it had not been unpacked since it had been used by some person in travelling. The key, however, had yet to be found, and the search for it occupied nearly half an hour. When it was discovered at length, the rusty lock required several minutes more ere it would yield; but when all this was accomplished, and the trunk opened, a quantity of clean linen was discovered neatly packed, from which, without much search, a lady's night dress and nightcap, richly laced, but yellow with age, were drawn forth and hung up at the fire to air. It was now the turn of the two maids to think their lord as mad as a March hare, for by the common process of reasoning which maid servants usually employ on such occasions, that is to say, taking up the two first facts that come to hand, and clapping them together, these two young ladies concluded that the noble viscount was going to dress himself in the night-clothes of his sister, who had been dead for a quarter of a century, and go to bed in the state sleeping-room. They were more confirmed in this opinion than ever when the peer concluded his proceedings by saying, "There, that will all do very well! Now you may leave me, and when Jerry Tripe arrives, send him up here directly."

The maids accordingly retired with due decorum, and betook themselves to the servants' hall. Scarcely had they been gone five minutes, however, when the bell of the state-room rang and produced some difficulty in the lower regions, for but one footman had been left in the house, and he had gone out to the back door of the castle to speak a few sweet words to the laundry maid who had come up to the back door to speak a few sweet words to him. There being no help for it, Nelly Thomson went to see what her lord wanted, and Jane went also up the stairs for company, taking a peep into Mr. Fitzurse's room as she passed, but not going in, though he beckoned to her to do so.

"Go down into the dining-room, Nelly," said the peer to the housemaid, "open the liqueur case that you will find by the ice pail, and bring me out the bottle that is marked, Curaçoa. Bring me a glass also; there's a good girl. I don't know how it is, I can't help thinking of my sister in this room."

Nelly Thomson disappeared, and was longer absent than the earl thought proper, but when she returned she had an immense quantity of wonder in her face, with some horror, and some fear.

"Lord, my lord," she cried, "such a thing has happened!"

"What the devil is it?" demanded the peer. "Don't stand staring with your mouth open like a stuck pig, but give me a glass of Curaçoa, and tell me what it's all about."

"About, my lord," cried the girl gingling the bottle and glass together, as her hand shook while she poured out the liquor, "it's about poor old Scapulary, the clerk and sexton, who has been murdered in his bed at six o'clock this morning, by Joey Pike, the waiter at the Half Moon."

"Murdered!" exclaimed the peer.

"Ay, my lord," replied the girl, "he was quite dead when they found him."

"A devilish good thing too!" cried the peer; "the old vagabond *must* hold his tongue now. Well done, Joey Pike. 'Pon my soul I'll give him half-a-crown if he can prove that he did it."

"Oh, my lord, there's no doubt that he did it," cried the girl again; "for Mrs. Scapulary had just stepped out, they say, to get a penn'orth of milk, and was not gone more than five minutes, and in the meanwhile, Tims, the market gardener, saw Joey come out of the cottage in a great fluster and scud away as hard as he could go."

"It's all a lie," said the peer, after reflecting a moment, and recollecting that he had seen Joey Pike, whose face he knew well, with Worrel in the morning. "It's all a lie, girl."

"Well, my lord," said Nelly bridling, "all I know is that old Scapulary is as dead as a door nail."

"That's good luck at all events," said the peer, whoever did it. "Hark, there's twelve o'clock, isn't it? Ay, and there's a noise down stairs too. There they are, there they are, I'm sure! Send them up, Nelly, send them up! Quick, quick, send them all up here!"

Nelly flew to obey her lord's behest and to satisfy her own curiosity, and in about three minutes more four men mounted the great staircase, and entered the state bedchamber, carrying between them, in an arm-

chair, a young lady clothed in a light dressing-gown, which displayed from under the edge thereof two beautiful little white feet, one in a slipper lined with fur, and one without any covering whatsoever. She had a nightcap on her head, from which, however, escaped bright masses of glossy and curling hair; and, while over her eyes was bound one red silk handkerchief, over her mouth was tied another, so as to prevent any part of her face from being seen, except the delicate little nose, *tant soit peu retroussé*, and a part of a fair cheek. By order of the peer, these bandages were immediately removed, and Laura Longmore, as pretty as ever, but looking wild, frightened, and fatigued was presented to the eyes of the spectators.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FUGITIVE THOUGHTS OF JOEY PIKE—THE CHEVALIER TAKES A ROLL AFTER BREAKFAST—THE CHEVALIER OBTAINS HIS FIRST VIEW OF LONDON BY NIGHT—THE AUTHOR THEREUPON ADDRESSES THE GODS AND GODDESSES, IN ORDER TO MYSTIFY THE READER, AND BE MISTAKEN FOR AN OLD GREEK—A CATALOGUE OF SIGHTS—WORREL MAKES AN UNOIVIL COMPARISON—THE CHEVALIER AGREES, AND PUTS UP AT THE GOLDEN CROSS.

“ILLUSTRISSIMO SIGNORE,—

“It is impossible for you to conceive the *shaggura* with which I was driven to abandon you this morning, and—as my learned friend, Winkin de Worde, used to say—to go like Cæsar, *summa diligentia*, on the top of the diligence to London. But, sir, these people accuse, me of having committed an *affroose* crime; and although I am as innocent of it as an *enfant*, yet they would put me in prison, perhaps, for two or three months; and, some *beau matin*, I might find myself *suspendu* before I knew any thing about it. The imprisonment I could not bear, *piu-toasto morir*; and as for the *potence* with which I am threatened, nothing can deliver me from it but your *temoignage*. They accuse me, sir, of having assassinated poor old Toby Scapulary, the sexton, at the very time when I was having the *felicitah* of accompanying yourself and Signor Worrel in your expedition against the forces from Outrun Castle. Now, though it be not impossible that this hand-and-arm *quel bracheo e mano* might slay two men at once, yet it is quite impossible that I, Guisseppe Pike, could accompany you to the slaughter of one, and kill another more than a mile off at the same moment. If, then, you will condescend to pardon my taking such an unceremonious *congé*, and will, together with my proudly-esteemed

young patron, Signor Worrel, testify to my *innocentia*, you will confer the greatest *benefice* upon

“Your *umilissimo servo*,

“JOEY PIKE.

“P.S. No. 1.—I am to be found at the sign of the *Chien Noir*, or Black Dog, in what my French friends would call the *Rue de Manacles*, but which we call Fetter-lane.

“P.S. No. 2.—I scarcely dare entertain the *speranza* of ever being received into your service again, after the *inconceivable escapade* which I have been obliged to commit. But all that I can say is, that I am as pure of the crime as the holy virgin of Loretto, who, an Italian friend assured me upon his sacred honour, is a great deal purer than any other virgin in the world; and that if you will overlook the inconvenience, I will ever serve you with devotion and reconnoissance.

“P.S. No. 3.—As I quitted the half-moon *subito*, I had not time to settle with good Mrs. Muggins for the small *salario* which I was to receive; and if you would condescend to beg her to send it to me, together with my little *trosseau*, the benefit would be sensitively appreciated by your *devooy*.

“J. P.”

Such was the epistle brought down by the coach, and which the Chevalier de Lunatico received at the breakfast table of Mr. Longshanks, on the morning subsequent to that of our revered friend's visit to the bereaved Mr. Longmore. Nearly at the same time, a large packet was put into his hands, containing the letters of introduction which his philosophical acquaintance had promised him for various individuals in London; and the chevalier, with that beautiful promptitude which is peculiar to the personages of his planet, preventing them in general from looking before they leap, determined instantly to proceed to London at once, to discover the residence of his inestimable servant, Joey Pike, and to entertain himself in the capital till such time at least as all annoyance in regard to the affair of the duel was at an end; for by this time he had, upon due consideration, made up his mind to the fact, that although a day or two's practical acquaintance with prison discipline might be very agreeable, as well as consistent with his views and purposes, a month or six weeks thereof would be neither necessary nor agreeable. He only paused, therefore, to consider one thing, which was, whether Worrel would accompany him or not; for it must be remembered that the chevalier had rather rashly swallowed some drops of that particular elixir, which instantly produced in his bosom a sympathy with those persons in whose company he drank it; and he now found himself what he called, very foolishly unwilling to part from his young friend. During the whole of the preceding day, Worrel had either wandered through the scenes of former happiness, or shut himself up in the room which had been assigned to him at the good surgeon's, making himself as miserable as heart could desire.

Now, the reader, who is behind the scenes, knows that all this grief was very unnecessary, having beheld the fair Laura safe and well at Outrun Castle—but we all make ourselves miserable unnecessarily as well as Harry Worrel; and the same dear reader may rest perfectly satisfied, that the only eye which sees behind the scenes on all occasions, and knows the actual facts, and ultimate results of all that takes place throughout the universe, judges our sorrows and miseries as unnecessary as those of Harry Worrel seem to the reader. At least, such was the opinion delivered afterwards by our excellent friend Mr. Longshanks; and where is the man who would question the dictum of so profound a moral philosopher? To Worrel then the chevalier instantly applied, and, to his great satisfaction found that he was quite as willing to visit the capital city of Great Britain as if he had been fresh from the moon.

Harry Worrel, it must he said had, on the previous evening, stolen an interview with Mr. Longmore himself, and their mutual tears had brought the old man and the young one closer together than years of happy and contented intercourse had done. And now the reader may, perhaps, accuse the writer of being an Irishman, to which he will neither plead guilty or not guilty, but to the covert and insidious part of the charge, that in his capacity of Irishman he has committed a bull, by first saying, that Harry Worrel spent the whole of the preceding day in wandering round the scenes of former happiness, or in his own room; and afterwards declaring he visited Mr. Longmore.

But the reader must be now informed that the very room in the inn which Mr. Longmore tenanted, was one of those scenes of former happiness; inasmuch as in that room he had spent two hours with Laura Longmore, while in the market-place below, her father, in a speech of vast length, proposed a remarkably stupid candidate as the legislative representative of the people of the town.

Harry Worrel did then, most willingly undertake to accompany Mr. de Lunatico in the stage coach to London; and as the hour was approaching at which the aforesaid vehicle passed the end of the village, an instant bustle of preparation took place. Mr. Longshanks added some letters to those which had been furnished by Mr. Longmore. The servants were all actively in expectation of the departing half-crown, and all was ready at the end of about half-an-hour. The gardener then carried down the goods and chattels of the parties, taking especial care of the chevalier's invaluable portmanteau, which from the glistening whitish green skin wherewith it was covered, unlike any earthly portmanteau he had ever seen, engaged the worthy horticulturist's attention, and excited his respect and admiration. A short discussion then took place as to whether it would be better to proceed on the outside or the inside of the coach; both Worrel and the chevalier being anxious to enjoy the fresh air, if possible, and their friend, Mr. Longshanks, advising them strenuously on the contrary, to shut themselves up in the inside of the vehicle, lest they should be seen in passing through the village of Outrun, and consigned to the inside of a prison.

The question, however, was decided for them by the arrival of the coach. No outside place was to be obtained at all ; the inside was quite vacant ; and after shaking the hospitable host by the hand, they got in and were speedily rolling on their way to London. Harry Worrel bent down his head and said nothing ; and the chevalier, who perfectly understood what was to be done on such occasions, looked out of the window and said nothing either. Thus passed an hour, and then some little thing, it matters not what, caused one or the other of them to speak. Conversation began with two or three words,—left off—began again—fell to the ground once more. It seemed as if each was reluctant to talk, and yet each helped the other on a little, till after a while it flowed on in a smooth and even strain, low and melancholy enough, but yet pleasing to both. Thus hour after hour slipped away ; thus change after change of horses took place, and every now and then the stream of conversation would be varied by the chevalier inquiring, and by Worrel explaining the meaning of the various things they saw.

It was dark when they entered London, and the dearly beloved reader may perhaps suppose, that such was not the moment the chevalier should have chosen for taking his first view of the British capital ; but in this point the reader is mistaken ; for one of the most characteristic times of London, if I may make use of such an expression, is in the spring time, about an hour after dame night has let the train of her black petticoat fall down upon the floor of the earth.

Oh, ye gods and goddesses ! that, high upon the top of Olympus, know nothing, or very little, of what is going on in great cities after nightfall, you cannot conceive what a scene the vast metropolis presents for an hour or two at the close of each successive day !

All the varied objects of that scene rushed upon the keen eyes of the chevalier, one by one, as he looked out from the window of the vehicle in which he was whirled along. The multitude of gas lamps, the blazing shop windows, shawls, stockings, macintoshes, shoes, silver, gold, jewels, plate glass, books, newspapers, medicines, doctors' bottles, toys, prints, furniture, guns, pistols, swords, epaulets, breeches, stays, petticoats, bustles, bonnets, caps, handkerchiefs, gloves, vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, game, all came dashing upon his visual organs with a rapidity that might have blinded any other unaccustomed eyes but those of the Chevalier de Lunatico. It seemed as if he was being pelted with every thing eatable, drinkable, wearable, usable, readable, feelable, hearable, smellable, thinkable, that the world ever produced. But this was not one-half of the affair, for these were all objects fixed and immovable : it was he that was whirled past them—they, in reality, did not make the assault upon him. But, in addition to this, there were all the moving sights of the place ; there were hackney coaches carrying ladies of one rank out to tea parties ; there were gentlemen's carriages carrying persons of another class out to dinner parties. There were cabriolets, and their harnessed lightning, whirling members of parliament down to St. Stephen's with the view of governing or misgoverning the nation. There were police vans, like the carts of a vagabond menagerie, transporting their gaol birds (that were likely soon to be retrans-

ported) from the torture-house of the police office to the torture-house of the prison. There were wagons rolling the riches of the world in and out of London; there were carts carrying the goods and chattels of the citizens from one part of the city to the other; there were costermongers, dwindling down from the pony, through the ass, to the dog, whirling about their lesser vehicles, and their retail wares. There was the omnibus, the voracious omnibus, the Leviathan of the great city, with a dozen Jonahs in its belly, and likewise the locomotive solitude of the hack cab with the driver perched upon his wandering observatory behind, and then there were all the thousands of asses, and horses, and dogs, drawing their vehicles upon their destined course. But, besides all these, there were the two-legged things that kept the pavement, merchants, tradesmen, shopmen, mechanics, labourers, swindlers, pickpockets, thieves, gentlemen and blackguards with cigars in their mouths. Then there were ladies, shopwomen, market women, tradesmen's wives, personages of a sadly distinct profession, and young ladies carrying bandboxes, as if they were taking home bonnets; and there were multitudes of little children engaged in every sort of laudable occupation, staring, chattering, hooting, crying, screaming, wondering; learning how to become thieves, engaged in picking pockets, or occupied in being run over. It was a wonderful sight, and all by lamplight; but the reader may wish to know, before we convey the chevalier to the inn, at which he was destined to stop, what impression all this made upon him. What he thought of it in short.

The answer may be very soon given. Why, he thought it very like the capital of the moon, indeed; and, had he not inadvertently packed up all his billets in his portmanteau, he would certainly have showered forth whole handfulls out of the window, summoning the mixed multitude to appear at St. Luke's. He did in truth put his hands in his pockets, as Worrel asked him, if it did not seem like bedlam broke loose. But, finding no tickets there, he merely replied, "Very," and in a few minutes after, the coach made a rush at the golden cross, Charing-cross, which may well be considered as the centre of every thing, except gravity, and at which, consequently, the worthy commissioner from the moon determined to put up.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WRITER DEFENDS HIMSELF AGAINST ANTICIPATED REPROACHES—HOW LAURA LONGMORE HAPPENED TO COME WHITHER SHE DID COME—LAURA DISLIKES HER SITUATION—THE VISCOUNT BEGINS TO HAVE DOUBTS AS TO THE PLEASANTNESS OF HIS OWN—THE SPEECHES OF HIS SATELLITES BELIEVE HIM—HE EVINCES THE FRANKNESS OF HIS NATURE—THE EVASION OF CERTAIN PRISONERS RENEWS THE FERRER'S EMBARRASSMENT—HE IS BELIEVED AGAIN BY THE PROFOUND WISDOM OF TOM HAMILTON.

READER, did you ever see a cat with a mouse? Did you ever see a child with a fly? Did you ever see a boy tormenting a dog? Did you ever yourself feel inclined to make a fellow-creature linger with long impatience upon your sovereign will? If so, you know quite well the pleasure of teasing, and can form a faint, a very faint idea of the delight with which an author keeps his public in suspense in regard to this or that character, for whom, he is well aware, he has created an interest. He will do any thing to prolong your pain; he will lead you to totally different scenes; he will talk to you of totally different people; he will favour you with an interminable landscape, *à la* ———; he will give you a page of pretty smartness, *à la* ———; he will detain you through two pages of soft nothing, *à la* ———; he will tease you with a load of frothy philosophy, *à la* ———; he will venture to be dull and heavy, light and empty, a twaddler or a bore, sooner than not keep you upon the tenter hooks of suspense, if he once knows he has thoroughly hooked you upon them. Such, dear reader, you may think perhaps is the case in the present instance; but, in good truth, you are mistaken, it was merely a sense of imperative duty that led the writer to quit fair Laura Longmore, and pursue the Chevalier de Lunatico along his appointed path. To return, however, to Outrun Castle, and to the precise moment at which we left it—Laura Longmore, being then, as the reader recollects, seated in an arm-chair in the antiquated state room, with a blazing wood fire before her, and the old-fashioned bed, with its carved pillars and green and yellow hangings, behind her; the viscount, with rubicund countenance, on one side, the housemaid on the other, and four or five stout serving men of different grades and classes, forming a circle in front, like that which waits the beck of royalty on certain days in March, April, May, and June. She herself, poor girl, was dazzled, bewildered, and confused, besides being half choked, so that she opened both her eyes and her mouth, like some pretty little bird when dragged out of a trap by a mischievous boy.

When first caught by the hands that now brought her to Outrun Castle, in the court of her father's house, which she had very imprudently re-entered, she had imagined them to be friendly hands, and, finding the place somewhat too hot to hold her, had suffered them to carry her away very quietly. When she found, however, that they did not take her back

to her father, she began to ask questions, and very soon after had still farther reason to suppose the five gentlemen to have different views from her own in the proceeding, from their putting a handkerchief delicately over her mouth, and tying it in a knot behind. The practice of locking the stable door after the steed is stolen most men have to regret through life, and poor Laura was very sorry indeed that she had not screamed before. Nevertheless, she took the opportunity of the adjusting this unpleasant sort of cravat to utter two or three very shrill cries for help; but those cries were altogether drowned in the universal roar and confusion which, as we have already shown, was going on round Mr. Longmore's house. Doubtless, at the time that we gave that description, the reader, with that spice of saucy criticism, which was introduced into Paradise by Satan, and has lurked in man's nature ever since the fall, harshly judged that it was altogether unnecessary, a superfluity, a redundant excrescence, like one of the long, tiresome accounts of a modern romance, or one of the lumps of lobster-salad philosophy that ornament our most fashionable novels. But no such thing; it was given solely for the purpose of letting the reader see in an after place how the cries of poor Laura Longmore were drowned in the riot of the fire, and making him open his eyes with wonder at the marvellous harmony and consistency reigning through every part of this extraordinary performance.

However that may be, poor Laura gazed wildly round her when she found herself in a strange room; and although she knew well the countenance of the noble viscount, it brought her no satisfactory solution of the enigma of her situation. For a moment no words could she utter, and, in the meanwhile, the noble lord himself looked with a sharp and eager glance for the face of his butler.

"Where's Jerry?" he cried. "Where's Jerry Tripe?" His eyes turned towards the man who served him in the capacity of chief gamekeeper.

"Why, my lord," he replied, touching the top of his forehead with the hand that had not his hat in it, "they have bagged him. The strange gentleman with the long nose, I find—for I stopped a bit behind to inquire—doubled upon him, and gave him in charge too."

"By jingo, that's awkward," cried the peer. "I shouldn't wonder if he peached."

"Lord bless you, my lord, no," cried the gamekeeper. "Jerry will waddle off some way, depend upon it. He knows old Tom the constable quite well, and will come round him some way."

"Come here, come here," cried the peer, "we must consult with Tom Hamilton."

Thus saying, he was about to retreat from the room, when Laura suddenly stopped him for a moment by exclaiming, "Oh, my lord, what have you brought me here for?"

The question was a very simple one, nearly as simple indeed as those which her majesty's ministers generally refuse to answer when asked in the House of Commons, on the ground of a reply being likely to prove detrimental to the public service. The peer, however, though well

versed in parliamentary forms, took a different view of the matter, and having certain good-humoured points in his nature, he replied in a cheerful, jolly tone, shaking both Laura's hands, "Come, come, sit down; there's a dear pretty little soul, and you shall hear all about it by-and-by. Make yourself comfortable, and take a drop of something warm. I'll send you up a jug of mulled claret and a toast, for these rough fellows of mine seem to have fetched you out of bed. Sit down and warm your feet, and I'll be back again presently. Get out, Hardness—Get out, Blackstone—Jack, you blackguard, get out—Away with every one of you!—Jane, come along you too; I don't choose to have two women laying their heads together."

Thus saying, he saw his party march out before him rank and file, and then left the room himself, turning the great key in the lock behind him.

"Now, what the devil's the meaning of all this?" he exclaimed, addressing the gamekeeper. "How come you to be three hours too late? How come you to have brought the girl in her night things? You have not broken into the house, you rascal, surely?"

"Why, the house is burnt down, my lord," replied one of the men.

"Arson!!" exclaimed the peer, still fancying that his commands had been over-acted. But a few words more explained to him that Jerry Tripe and his associates, having been sent with the double purpose of arresting the chevalier and Worrel and carrying off Laura, had contrived to forget three hours at a public-house on their way to Mr. Longmore's, had wandered about the place for some little time concocting schemes for remedying their error, and had just determined to effect an entrance upon the pretence of capturing the chevalier for his share in the duel, when the fire broke out and presented them with all the facilities they could desire. The tidings certainly took the peer by surprise. The reader knows that he was a frank man in his way; and, blurting forth as usual exactly what he felt, he showed what other men in general conceal—namely, unfeigned pleasure at that which gave success to his own plans, although it involved others in ruin and destruction. When he heard, then, of the burning of Mr. Longmore's house—of Laura having darted back again in search of something which she considered very valuable—of his men having pounced upon her through a back door, and carried her off unperceived into the little fir wood behind, he laughed, rubbed his hands, chuckled, exclaimed, "Capital, capital!" and vociferated, "It could not have happened better. They think her dead; depend upon it they think her dead—roasted, roasted, like a leg of mutton—a nice little fat roast she'd make too—but that's capital—Now, we can do with her just what we like without any inquiry."

As he said this he paused in thought, and then said "A hum! A hah!" then thought again and added in a low tone to himself, "If I can but manage to keep Freddy as snug—Where's Tom Hamilton?—n it, I must speak with Tom Hamilton."

But Tom Hamilton was not so easily found as the peer expected, for in truth the worthy lord had entirely forgotten his son's dearly beloved friend during the whole evening, and Tom, upon the principle

of making himself still more beloved, had according to the old axiom, taken care of himself.

Tom Hamilton, it must be known, was a great favourite with the whole household. The maids declared that they would work for him by night or by day, and as to the men they all found something to admire in him, each in his own particular way, for Tom had a great genius for many of the arts and sciences on which the various domestics prided themselves. He could ride a horse, shoe a horse, or drive a horse as well as any man in Europe, and, therefore, he was a great friend to the coachman, the grooms, and the helpers, in the stable. He was a capital shot, and a famous angler; knew every thing about dogs as well as he did about horses; could ferret a warren or cast a net, or should need be, set a snare with any man—and thus Tom was a favourite with the gamekeeper, the lookers, and all the dependants of that branch. As for Jerry Tripe, he declared that Mr. Hamilton would tell a wine's age to a single year by only looking through the glass with one eye; and by talents of a similar kind he had conciliated the affections of all the footmen. The result of all this was, that Tom Hamilton did not go without his dinner, although the peer totally forgot him while dining in his son's room, and although almost all the servants had been sent out upon different errands. The cook had dressed him some cutlets, a fine trout, and a small spring chicken, and Jerry Tripe before he went out took especial care that if Mr. Hamilton was thirsty, it should not be for want of wine. Thus seated in the dining-room by himself, Tom had made himself extremely comfortable, had drank the exact portion that made his face glow and his eyes sparkle, his heart beat, and his spirits rise without disturbing the process of thought in the slightest degree, or making his steps in the least unsteady; and finding that the peer did not come down to entertain him, he walked out to entertain himself.

When the viscount then descended from the state chamber, leaving Laura behind him, he circum-ambulated the greater part of the house without finding the person he sought, and having no other resource he went back to the room of his son to consult with him on what steps they were to follow. He had scarcely opened the business of the night, however when Mr. Hamilton himself appeared, exclaiming with his face towards the peer,

“By Jove, my lord, they're all off.”

“Who do you mean Tom, who do you mean?” cried the viscount.

“Why our friend Jerry, with Worrel, Joey Pike, and the chevalier,” answered Tom Hamilton, and in a very few words he explained how he had walked forth in the direction of Ivy-hall to meet the party which had been despatched thither, and that he had discovered the evasion of his fellow-culprits from the gripe of the constables.

“That's awkward upon my soul,” cried the peer.

“Par-ti-cu-lar-ly unfortunate!” whispered forth Mr. Fitzurse.

“What's to be done, Tom?”

“Why,” answered Tom Hamilton, who to say the truth had not much fancied the serious part of the business, and now foresaw a good

joke. "Why they must be either caught again in a few days, or else they must quit this part of the country altogether; so you must keep yourself quite snug, Fitzurse—Can't you sham dead a little longer?"

"He shall by ——" cried the viscount; his face assuming a deeper shade at the very thought of his son coming to life inopportunistly. "He shall be dead for the next fortnight, and by the end of that time he shall be married. Why, Tom, we have got the girl here in the house."

"Why, I don't quite like to have any thing to do with that part of the matter," replied Tom Hamilton. "I'm afraid, my lord, you'll burn your fingers."

"Whew! never fear," cried the peer. "But that's no business of yours, Tom, so don't start difficulties."

"Why, I see one difficulty," replied the friend, "which you may have some trouble in getting over, at all events without my help."

"What's that?" cried the peer, half angrily. "What is that?"

"Why the coroner's inquest," answered Tom Hamilton. "If Fitzurse is dead, depend upon it the coroner will have an inquest upon him."

"D——n the coroner," cried the peer stamping his foot at this unexpected obstacle, "I have a great mind to shut him up too."

"No, no, that will never do," cried Tom Hamilton.

"By Jove," drawled Mr. Fitzurse, "it would be very pretty sport to have such a beast as a coroner up here; my father wants to make a menagerie of the castle."

"He's got some odd animals in it already," murmured Tom Hamilton. "If you leave it to me," he continued, "I'll manage the matter for you—only you must be all obedient to my commands. I've got a plan for you, viscount, that'll settle this affair in a trice."

"Name, name," cried the peer, as if he was shouting at a public meeting.

"Why we must let the jury sit upon him," said Tom Hamilton. "The farce will be a very good one, viscount. These are our parts—Fitzurse shall be a dead man again; we'll paint him blue and white, and lay him out. You shall be a mourning father, and we'll make you smell onions, or give you a bottle of hartshorn till you cry. I'll get on a white wig and a black coat with a snuff-box, a gold headed stick, knee-breeches, silk stockings, and my cuffs turned up to act the surgeon, sent for from London. I'll give evidence regarding the post mortem examination of the body."

"Capital, capital," cried the peer. "By jingo, Tom, you're a hearty good fellow. Hang me if we won't have another bottle of champagne to drink *Success to the dead man and confusion to the coroner's inquest.*"

CHAPTER XIX.

AN INQUEST ON THE CORPSE OF A LIVING MAN—A NEW USE IS DISCOVERED FOR A TABLE NAPKIN—A JUROR IS DISAPPOINTED OF HIS LAWFUL SEAT—THE VIEWING OF THE BODY AND THE MERRY MOURNERS—TOM HAMILTON TAKES OUT A DIPLOMA—THE PEER AND HIS FRIEND FIRE HOT SHOT AT EACH OTHER—THE JURY DECIDE UPON THEIR VERDICT.

It was at the hour of two of the following day. The servants of Out-run Castle were marshalled in the hall. Every thing was prepared up stairs. The noble viscount dressed—as the newspapers say, in describing some criminal at the bar—in a decent suit of mourning, was in the little-used library of his dwelling house, with the windows half closed, the corners of his mouth convulsively drawn down, and his eyes twinkling with scarcely repressed fun, when a large body of gentlemen, chosen from amongst the neighbouring ploughmen, and other respectable householders, arrived in a cart upon the gravelly esplanade before Out-run Castle, and began ascending the steps. Nearly at the same moment a personage with a shrewd, wind-cutting countenance, powder in his hair, a pig-tail behind, a black coat, covered with a blacker spenser, drab breeches, and continuations, came riding up upon a hard-mouthed malicious-looking pony, and received the salutations of the assembled jury as Mr. Crowner.

The worthy peer, unable to deny himself his joke, had determined upon receiving the whole quest in person, and consequently the coroner and train were ushered at once into the library, where he sat in state. In then they walked, the crown officer at their head, feeling a vast deal of respect for the peer, who was before him, and a vast deal of contempt for the jury who were behind. Thus, on entering the chamber, the worthy gentleman, who was a *ci-devant* attorney, paused suddenly to make a lowly reverence to the viscount; but while his head was describing the segment of a circle in its descent, a worthy juror who followed, and who did not expect this abrupt halt, was impelled forward, partly by his own impetus, partly by that of the whole inquest behind; and treading first upon the coroner's heels with his hob-nailed shoes, and then endeavouring to fend himself off with his hands, he fairly brought his worthy leader on his knees, at the feet of the peer. Up started the coroner again with sundry fierce contortions of visage, and after three hops of agony, he exclaimed, "Gamaliel Dickens! Gamaliel Dickens! The man's a born idiot, or I would commit him."

"Dang it! Mr. Coroner," cried Gamaliel, taking himself by the forelock, "I couldn't help it, mun. It's all your fault, Stubbs."

Stubbs, with all the skill of an outgoing minister, handed over the embarrassment and the blame to his successor, and a voice from behind, belonging to an ex-volunteer sergeant, was heard exclaiming,

"March! Right shoulders forward! Form in line, and make your bows like men!"

In the meanwhile Mr. Coroner had recovered himself, and was reverently shaking the tips of the two fingers which the peer held out to him, while the peer himself was pinching his own toe under the table, to prevent himself from exploding.

"A sad affair this, Mr. Gregory," he said, "sad affair;" and thereupon he was seized with a fit of coughing, which served his purpose very well; for, under cover thereof, he got rid of a fit of laughter, which might otherwise have thrown him into convulsions.

"Shocking, my lord, shocking!" cried Mr. Gregory, "to think of such a fellow as that young Worrel daring to shoot your lordship's son: but we'll manage him, my lord, we'll manage him—though, to say the truth, I should not have ventured to hold an inquest in your lordship's house, unless it had been by your own particular desire."

"Oh, of course we must have an inquest," said the peer, "and a verdict of wilful murder and all that sort of thing. These gentlemen will all see the thing in the right point of view, I am sure;" and carrying forward his stout stomach with a stately air to the side of the room where the jury were ranged in their Sunday best, bowing with all their might, he took Mr. Gamaliel Dickens by the hand, making him blush, and simper, and cry, "Lauk, my lord!"

"Of course, Mr. Dickens," said the peer, "you all know what you come here for?"

"To sit upon the young gentleman's boady," replied Mr. Dickens, with a grin which the peer didn't at that moment understand.

"And to find a verdict of wilful murder against the man that killed him, my good Gamaliel," rejoined Lord Outrun.

"Joost soa, joost soa, my lord," replied the bumpkin; "ony way your lordship pleases."

"And you, Mr. Stubbs," continued the peer: "this is a very shocking thing, indeed, Mr. Stubbs."

"Woundy shocking indeed," answered Mr. Stubbs. "I made the young lord's leather geeaters: so hang me if I doan't hang him as shot un."

"You are quite right, Mr. Stubbs," said the peer. "I dare say you are all of one mind?"

"Your humble servant to command," replied a third man upon the line; and the volunteer sergeant at the end making a military salute, the peer concluded the whole matter settled, and pointing to the door that led into the dining-room, he said—

"There, Mr. Coroner, is your jury room; and as you have doubtless all come a long way, I have taken care that you should have where-withal to pass the time of deliberation pleasantly. You will find roast beef and brimming ale for the jurors, and a chicken for the coroner, with a bottle of Madeira, which, by jingo—I mean upon my honour—has gone twice round Cape Horn. This is all according to rule, I think, Mr. Coroner."

The coroner made a low bow, and his mouth got juicy at the thought of the Madeira, but nevertheless he judged fit, at all events, to propose a business-like plan, whether it was followed or not, and he asked, "Had we not better view the body first, my lord?"

"No," replied the peer in a solemn tone, "I think refreshment will accuminate your discernment;" adding, *sotto voce*, "the chicken will get cold."

"Oh!" said the coroner, and in he walked into the dining-room, guided by a wave of the peer's hand.

"Dang it," said Stubbs to Dickens, in a low voice, as he followed his commanding officers, and beheld a mighty sirloin still hissing and crackling at the end of a long table, covered with resplendently white damask. "Dang it, Dickens, I didn't know these quests was such capital things. I hope there'll be a many more killed in the county."

"They is'n't all like this, I should think," said Dickens.

In the meanwhile the whole party advanced to the table, but a slight embarrassment ensued from the fact of certain white napkins being laid down between each knife and fork, concealing within the labyrinth of their folds an excellent piece of white bread.

"What's this for?" said Stubbs, as he took his place.

"To keep the bread cosy, I should think," said Dickens, looking under his napkin. But at that moment all eyes were turned upon the volunteer serjeant, who was a man never embarrassed about any thing. He saw the white napkin, he saw the fine red morocco chair; he was conscious that the garments of his nether man might not leave the most delicate remembrance on the spot where it was placed. He remembered in his days of pipe-clay having imprinted his exact proportions upon a horse-hair seat at his colonel's. With a rapidity of combination indicative of the man of true genius, and without the slightest hesitation to betray ignorance or doubt, he seized the napkin, unfolded it, spread it upon his chair, and sat down. Such is the force of ease and self-confidence upon the minds of others, that every man followed his example on the instant. Can we wonder that they did so, having no knowledge whether he was right or not, when we every day see, in the first legislative assembly in the world, large bodies of men following any self-confident fool that will lead them, knowing him to be wrong the whole time.

The coroner knew better, but he said nothing upon that score, only commanded Mr. Gamaliel Dickens, in an authoritative tone, to say grace like a Christian; which Mr. Dickens did accordingly, exclaiming—

"For this here coroner's inquest, Lord make us truly thankful."

"Amen," said Mr. Stubbs, and down they sat again.

The servants, in the meanwhile, who were collected to help them, nearly choked themselves with their fingers to prevent themselves from roaring with laughter; but having received a hint from their lord that it was not particularly necessary the perceptions of the jury should be very clear, they continued to supply them with abundance of good ale till such time as the coroner himself thought fit to interpose, and to

give a hint that it was necessary they should view the body. Immediately after these words were spoken, one of the attendants quitted the room, and another, after conversing with the coroner, benignly offered to show the jury the way, which they were certainly in no condition to discover themselves.

For his part, the crown officer judged that it would be better to suffer them to make their inspection without his presence—there being yet about four glasses of Madeira in the decanter. The jury, therefore, trooped out, and the coroner remained with his wine, taking his first glass leisurely enough, and picking his teeth between whiles: the next glass was somewhat more accelerated; but it had scarcely found its way to his lips when the voice of Stubbs was heard, shouting aloud from the top of the stairs—

“Mr. Crowner! Mr. Crowner! will you ha’ the goodness joost to step up and say whether I be to sit upon the boady or not—them d——d fellows won’t let me get on. I came here to sit upon the boady, and dang me if I won’t, if I have law upon my side.”

This speech was delivered in the tone of a deeply-injured person, and the coroner exclaiming—“the idiots!” in a tone of sovereign contempt, re-filled and re-emptied his glass, and rushed up stairs.

The scene that was presented to him at the door of Mr. Fitzurse’s room, was rather shocking. The assembled body of jurors filled up the entrance, some of them looking flushed and indignant, some of them looking bewildered, some of them rather merry. Two servants, in the convulsions of smothered laughter, were keeping them off from the bed of death, whereon, by the dim light of the half-closed shutters, might be seen lying the outstretched form and pale face of the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse, with two copious streams of a red colour distaining his brow and cheeks from a small dark spot on his forehead. On the other side of the bed was beheld, by the aid of a spirit lamp which threw a ghastly blue glare over the whole apartment, a tall portly gentleman with a rosy countenance, a powdered wig, with two rows of curls on each side of his head, and a stout powdered queue behind. He was dressed in a close cut coat of black, well powdered on the collar, a thick white neckcloth, long flapped black waistcoat, black silk breeches and stockings, and silver buckles, a gold snuff-box in his hand, a cane hung at his wrist, and although he was certainly a very good-looking elderly gentleman, no one would have taken him for rollicking Tom Hamilton, unless they were much better informed upon the subject than any of the jurors there present. At the moment of the coroner’s approach that most respectable personage was bending over the corpse of Mr. Fitzurse, affecting busily to smooth down some of the bed clothes, which one of the too zealous jurymen had deranged in an effort actually to sit upon the body. It was evident, however, that the surgeon—for the coroner concluded at once that such must be the character of the personage before him—it was very evident, I say, that the surgeon must have been a dear friend to Mr. Fitzurse, for as he bent down his head he was clearly affected by a spasmodic motion, and warm tears continued to fall upon the countenance of the corpse, over whom also,

he seemed to be muttering some prayer or ejaculation, as his lips parted and a low murmuring was heard in the room.

In front, however, was a much more important person in the eyes of the coroner; being no other than the peer himself. Most unfortunately, indeed, it happened, that the viscount had been seized at that particular moment, with another violent fit of coughing which interrupted him sadly.

"Take them away, coroner," he cried, "take them away, (*cough, cough, cough, cough, cough*) we've had quite enough of them, (*cough, cough, cough,*) they've viewed the body, (*cough, cough, cough,*) and, by jingo, now they want to sit upon it! (*cough, cough, cough.*)

"Well, warn't I toald that I were to sit upon 'un," said Mr. Dickens. "I want nothing more nor _____"

"Silence!" cried the coroner. "Have you viewed the body, gentlemen?"

"Oh, ay, we've viewed 'un," said Stubbs, "but you see, Mr. Coroner, _____"

"Well, if you have viewed it," said the coroner, who bore his drink discreetly, "walk down stairs."

"Right shoulders forward," cried the ex-volunteer serjeant, "single file, march! and away they trooped at the word of command, nearly tumbling over each other in the rapidity of the descent.

The coroner brought up the rear—the door of the deceased gentleman's room was shut—and up started the corpse, holding both his sides and roaring with laughter!

"Hurra!" cried the disconsolate father, sinking into an arm-chair, with his heels beating the ground, and his fat stomach heaving up and down like a soufflet.

"Driven them from the field, by Jupiter!" cried the surgeon, handing a glass of punch out of the spirit lamp to the corpse; "but d——n it, my lord, we must keep serious; our part isn't played out yet, and they have very nearly beaten us already. Why, if that fellow who would sit upon the body had been a little nearer he'd have heard the chuckles in the dead man's stomach!"

"Lord have mercy upon us!" cried the peer; "it's capital! But come, Tom, as you say, we must get back our long faces. Give me a glass of cold water; if any thing will make me serious that will. There now, that's sad enough! Come now, Tom, let us go down and give evidence. See that your wig's right, old fellow."

Tom went to a glass, adjusted his curls; and while the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus took another ladle full of the revivifying fluid, the peer and his companion proceeded to the dining-room, where the servants who had brought Mr. Fitzurse home from the scene of the fatal affray, as the coroner termed it, were giving, unconsciously, a false impression by their true evidence in regard to the death of their respectable young master.

A little bustle ensued upon the entrance of the viscount and Tom Hamilton, all the jurors rising, and pulling at the hair upon their foreheads, while the two gentlemen took seats beside the coroner. The evidence of the servants was soon concluded, and the crown officer

then turned to the peer, who took the opportunity of presenting Mr. Heavitree, the famous surgeon. The coroner and Mr. Heavitree bowed, and then the former inquired whether the viscount had any information to give upon this melancholy occasion.

"I shall be very happy," answered his lordship with a rueful air, "to answer any questions that may be asked of me."

"A hem!" said the coroner. "May I ask if you have any precise information in regard to the person whose hand committed this sad act? As yet we have nothing but hearsay, for none of the witnesses we have examined were present."

"Why," replied the peer, "I saw a challenge given to my son, the night before last, from a young dog of the name of Worrel, and so it is natural to conclude that he was the man who shot him."

"Precisely," replied the coroner with a sapient look. "Pray, my lord, is your lordship aware of who was your son's second upon this tragical expedition?"

The peer cocked his eye at Mr. Heavitree with a look of indescribable fun, and then replied,

"Oh, yes. I know quite well. A young rakehelly vagabond fellow of the name of Hamilton, better known as Tom Hamilton the Blazer, a desperate hand at the bottle and among the girls, a capital shot, and rather fond of fishing. Never ask him to any of your houses, gentlemen, for he'll drink you out a pipe of Madeira in no time. He got the poor boy into a number of scrapes, and I dare say this was all his fault if the truth were known."

The coroner took down all the particulars carefully, and after putting a few more very pertinent questions, he turned to the jury inquiring if they wished to ask his lordship any thing.

Up started Stubbs without more ado.

"Why, my lord," he said, with the usual tug, "I do wish to ax your lordship one thing, which is—couldn't you just give us another mug of that ere ale? It's woundy dry work sitting here."

The coroner reproved him solemnly; but the peer was more complacent and the ale was brought up; upon which no farther questions were asked by the jury. The coroner then turned to Mr. Heavitree, and begged that he would make any statement he thought proper in regard to the cause of death.

Tom now gave back the peer his shrewd look and replied,

"I have examined the body of the deceased, and find a small wound in the centre of the forehead, which is the only thing about him likely to cause death that I can discover. It is not indeed very profound, and on examining it I certainly did not reach the brain, but this, from my knowledge of the deceased's family, did not surprise me, as that organ in his noble house is ordinarily exceedingly small, and perhaps in his case may be wanting altogether."

"Whew!" cried the peer with a long shrill whistle.

"My dear sir," said the coroner, "you forget his lordship's presence."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried one of the bumpkins who took the joke and seemed to enjoy it.

"I do not forget in the least," replied Tom Hamilton, imbibing an

enormous pinch of snuff and looking round with the contemptuous superiority of a great surgeon, who always seems to feel that our bones, limbs, muscles, nerves, and arteries are all at his disposal, and that he may cut us up morally and physically whenever he pleases. "I do not forget at all, Mr. Coroner, nor is there any offence to his lordship, there are many more men in the world without brains than you know of. Now I will very willingly this moment bring down my circular-saw, and just take a little bit, not bigger than the palm of my hand, out of the skulls of the gentlemen here present, and I will answer for it, that in two heads out of three you won't find four pennyweights of brains!"

There was a general bustle amongst the jury and an evident tendency to run towards the door, Dickens, who was a stout fellow, muttering to himself—"I'll knock thee down, if thou touchest my head!"

Tom Hamilton, however, proceeded in his character of surgeon—

"It is a very mistaken idea, Mr. Coroner, that people can't get on in the world without brains. For my part I think, physiologically speaking, the less brains a man has the better. Why I have known a famous ministry keep off and on for ten years together, and not three out of the whole party had any brains at all. But to return to the matter in hand. My opinion is, that the state to which the Honourable Mr. Fitzurse was reduced, as you have it in evidence, about six o'clock yesterday morning, was, either by the rapid and violent propulsion of some small hard substance—whether round or angular, I cannot take upon myself to say—against the central part of the *os frontis*: or by the violent and rapid propulsion of his *os frontis* against some small hard substance—whether round or angular I have no means of knowing."

"That is to say," said the coroner, "that either a pistol ball came and knocked a hole in his head, or he went and knocked his head against a pistol ball?"

"You will put what interpretation upon my words you please, sir," replied the pretended surgeon with an air of profound wisdom, "I have given my opinion; and as this is a delicate matter I shall say no more."

"Very right too," cried Stubbs; "for my part, Mr. Crowner, I think the matter's very clear. It's a case of manslaughter."

"Halloo!" cried Dickens. "Manslaughter! I think it's summut wuss than that."

"Why how can that be?" cried Stubbs. "If it had been a woman it would have been murder, but as it's a man it's manslaughter!"

"I vote for *feely-de-se*!" said a small tailor from the end of the table; and every man now put forth his opinion, each being different from the other. Some insisted upon homicide, some upon murder, some upon petty larceny.

The coroner then rose and obtained silence, in order to explain to the gentlemen the real meaning of the various terms they had picked up like children gathering pebbles on the sea shore, without knowing what they really were. Being also primed and loaded by the worthy viscount, he gave them very broadly to understand that their verdict

must be one of murder, and was going on to mark clearly the distinctions between that crime and any other, when a gentleman, of a very thoughtful and considerate look, rose solemnly, scratched his head, and said—

“ Well, Mr. Crowner, I don't know——but I can't make out that hoale in his head !”

The matter had well nigh begun all over again. The coroner, however, stopped imperiously this system of trying back, and having so explained the matter that he thought there was no possibility of the men coming to any but one conclusion, he left it like other high officers, in the hands of the jury. After a moment's consultation, however, to his horror and astonishment the personage who acted as foreman returned a verdict of “ Wilful murder against the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse, and other persons unknown,” and to this they stuck in spite of all the coroner could say.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CHEVALIER DE LUNATICO TAKES AN EARLY WALK—SOME OF HIS FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF LONDON REPORTED—JOEY PIKE RECOVERED—THE CHEVALIER ENTERTAINS A BEGGAR, AND IS INVITED BY A REVIEWER.

The Chevalier de Lunatico was an early man, and although the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, is one of those houses in which one can practise early habits with greater impunity than any where else, yet even there he scared a dull housemaid on the stairs, who was listening to something that Boots was saying with their faces very close together. They both concluded that he must be the gentleman who was going by the five o'clock heavy Bristol, and Boots began to inquire concerning his luggage.

The chevalier, however, set him right; and issued forth into the streets of London, gazing round him with the curiosity which the scenes of the great metropolis might naturally produce. He had the fairest opportunity in the world of studying proper names—which, let me tell the reader, is no unimportant chapter in the natural history of national character. There they stood, in long rows against the boarded-up windows of the shops—sometimes bearing a clear or a mystic reference to the trades which were inscribed after them; sometimes set up in fierce opposition to the sort of business which the proprietors had chosen. There was Mr. Gold, the jeweller, and Mr. Spratt, the fishmonger, and Mr. Woollen, the hosier, and Mr. Bond, the law-stationer; while on the other hand, appeared Mr. Hogsflesh, the perfumer, Mr. Boxer, the man-milliner, Mr. Silver-tongue, the brass-founder, and Mr. Rotten, the pork-butcher. There was a Mr. Ramsbottom who dealt in lace, and on one door appeared Mr. Heavy-sides, professor of dancing. Mr. Stone dealt in feather-beds, and Mr.

Golightly in Cheshire cheeses. We could go a great deal farther, and tell all the manifold curious nomens and cognomens that the chevalier examined and noted down; but to say the truth the subject is a delicate one, and—besides all the filthy and obscene names with which Englishmen have thought fit to bedizen themselves, and which made Mr. de Lunatico judge that at least one half of the people ought to remigrate to his own sphere—there may be many a one which might offend some of our dearly beloved readers to have handled lightly, and therefore we forbear. Onward went the chevalier however, with his peculiar jaunty and inquiring look, remarking the various classes who at that early hour take their way out, and begin the miseries and labours of the day. But we must not trespass by our descriptions upon the peculiar walk of any gentleman who has written upon the humorous city of London; for as in every other profession, particular individuals are allowed to establish a right prescriptive in certain walks, there is no reason why the same should not hold good with authors also. Milkmen, pickpockets, women of the town, are all very tenacious in this respect; and although authors may be an inferior class, as the government seems to think them, they may perhaps improve by aping their betters. We will therefore simply give a few of the chevalier's brief notes, recording his matutinal excursion through the streets of the great metropolis. After commenting upon the names he goes on.

“Mem. All men in London before six o'clock walk with their shoulders up to their ears, and their hands in their pockets. Query—Can they be afraid that if they took theirs out other people would put their hands in? N.B.—All I met were of a class which seemed to have the least cause for fearing such a process.

“Mem. That the noses of all cobblers who live in stalls in London are red, and turn up at the point. Query—Can this proceed from frequent hammering between the nose and the lapstone? N.B.—It is but natural the nose should keep itself out of the way.

“Mem. The quantity of cabbage consumed in London must be immense. In Covent Garden alone I saw coming in enough to supply the whole moon. N.B.—They must dress their cabbage in gin, for there was a very strong smell of that fluid amongst all the people collected to buy and sell. Mem. To try the experiment when I get home.

“Mem. Saw a gentleman leaning against a post at the corner of a street called Russell; was hiccupping violently, and looking as if he did not see very distinctly, nevertheless he was preaching to a mob of boys around him who are picking his pocket. The sermon was tolerable. He must have been a clergyman because he had on a black coat. N.B.—The English clergymen preach in the open air. Query—Do they always preach drunk?”

Now the reader may suspect that we are joking with him, and say at once from his knowledge of such things, these are the notes of a Frenchman, or of an American, and not of the Chevalier de Lunatico. He would never generalize upon individual instances, or take up ideas hastily, or conceive first impressions to be the true means of judging

Nay, reader, I did not say that he relied upon these impressions. He only took them down as they occurred that he might remember them afterwards, but he did not publish them as facts till he had probed their reality. Asking his way as he went, he proceeded without many deviations from the right track, to the beautiful precincts of Fetter-lane; and, on entering the narrow passage of the Black Dog, where the people by this time were beginning to crawl about—the men with their slippers on, and the women with their hair rolled tightly round lumps of brown paper, he had the felicity of seeing his faithful follower, Joey, engaged in the pleasant morning occupation of making somewhat warm and very graceful love to an extremely pretty barmaid, upon whose cheeks, peeping through a thick coating of black smoke, were seen lilies and roses which might have graced the country. If difficulty of attainment be the measure of value, the fair barmaid was certainly a prize worth having. She had despised bagmen, trampled upon hucksters, and treated head-waiters with sovereign contempt. But it was evident that she was not proof against Joey's perfect self-complacency, which in almost every case is one of the most potent weapons that can be employed against the female heart. Men frequently rank another according to his estimation of himself, but women always do.

Joey was not in the slightest degree abashed at being caught in the fact; indeed, the only thing on earth that could abash him would have been any want of grace whatever. So long as he was Apollo in his own eyes, he felt a glorious confidence in his powers that nothing could shake. Awkwardness was the only bugbear of his imagination; and now as he happened to be leaning gracefully towards the right, with his arm half encircling the waist of the fair barmaid, while it seemed but leaning on the chair, his head lolling somewhat negligently towards the left shoulder, and his eyes rolling languidly over the features of the Fetter-lane beauty—one leg extended, and one toe pointed—Joey felt that the eyes of the whole world might rest upon him with satisfaction to them, and applause to him. As soon as he beheld the chevalier, with a simper of joyful satisfaction he withdrew his arm, took three steps forward, laid his hand upon his heart, or rather his velvet waistcoat, bowed profoundly, took a step backward, and bowed again. Explanations were then entered into, with which it is unnecessary to trouble the reader; and Joey in due form introduced the chevalier as his master to the fair *Elise de Tuppins*, as he called the pretty barmaid, who he informed Mr. de Lunatico was from his own *paese*. Arrangements were made for Joey's immediate removal to the Golden Cross, Charing Cross; and, taking a tender leave of Miss Tuppins, he accompanied his master on his way thither.

The first object that presented itself to the chevalier on issuing forth from the door of the Black Dog, was a wretched being attired in an old tattered pair of corduroy trowsers, through which his knees were perceptible, without stockings and without shoes. The only other covering that he seemed to possess was a sallow shirt little less torn than his nether garment; and with his hands under his arms to keep them warm, treading tenderly upon the hard stones, he took his shiver-

ing way along, as miserable a looking creature as it is possible to behold. The chevalier's bowels of compassion were instantly moved. "Is it possible," he exclaimed to himself, "that such misery can exist in a capital of a country overflowing with wealth, plunged in luxury, and loaded with splendour?"

Putting his hand in his pocket, he instantly gave the poor wretch half-a-crown, who replied in a tone of the deepest gratitude:—"God bless your honour!" at the same time, however, he raised his eyes to the face of the chevalier, and instantly compelled by the commissioner's peculiar powers to display his real feelings, he rolled his tongue into his cheek, winked his right eye most knowingly, and said, "Well done, old covey, this will get me a pint of gin, and oyster-sauce to my beefsteak. We'll have a flare up to-night when my woman comes home. She's out with Mother Gammon's two best babies, and will bring home half-a-guinea at least."

"Pray what do you mean by her two best babies?" demanded the chevalier in a sweet tone.

"Why, what a flat you are," said the poor unhappy mendicant; "but I'll tell you all about it. Why Mother Gammon has got twelve or fourteen of them babies; but Lord bless ye, some of 'em is not worth nothing at all, great, fat, rosy things, that goes a laughing and talking no how. But I says to my woman, says I, 'Vot's good's always cheapest in the end. So you give sixpence a piece more for the two best on 'em; and capital babies they is. One's as yellow as a guinea, and t'other's well nigh humpbacked, and they've had sitch a hedecation that they'll set up a cry o' theirselves when they see a soft chap at the end of the street. They've a natural instinct as teaches them when a feller's a flat the moment they sees him; so they're well woth the money."

"Then in short," said the chevalier, "you're not quite so badly off as these rags would make you appear"

"Lord bless ye," cried the man, "I hires them duds, my own toggery's all at home, only I chuse to be upon the loose lay just now, 'cause you see the mendicity folks had well nigh nabbed me when I was in the literary department. I don't mind telling you all this, now I've got your half-crown; but I must be jogging, for there's the old cove who walks regular to change along Fleet-street and Cheapside, who never misses his shilling and that was reckoned against me when I took the walk."

"And so," said the chevalier, "it is really a voluntary act of yours to go shivering along in this sharp morning, enduring all the miseries of utter destitution without the slightest occasion, when you might keep yourself comfortably by honest labour without half these privations. I must beg your acceptance of a ticket if you please. You must be mad, my good sir."

The man put aside the ticket the chevalier offered him with the back of his hand, replying in a tone of supreme contempt, "No, no, none of that ere humbug, no tickets for me. Honest industry's all my eye; why, upon the loose lay I can make my half-guinea a-day comfortable; and in this cursed country I couldn't get half-a-crown

any other way, if I were to work my fingers to the bone. France is the only country for a man of genius. I should have been one of the ministers by this time if I'd have been born in France. I must wet my whistle first, however; so good morning to ye old un," and he turned away.

"What does he mean by wetting his whistle?" demanded the chevalier, turning to Joey Pike.

"Merely, *excellence*, that he is going to take *Quelque chose de courte*," replied Joey Pike; and the chevalier walked on as wise as he was before.

The beggar's last speech, however, put him in mind that he had a letter for one of the ministers, and he determined, without fail, to present it that day, as well as the other letters Mr. Longmore had sent him. He, therefore, hurried his pace to get back, passing by some of the most splendid shops in the world, now wide open and displaying large sheets of plate-glass, each pane of which Joey Pike assured him, would be a fortune for a poor man.

"How can they afford to make such a display?" demanded the chevalier.

"Oh, they have two plans," replied Joey, "sometimes one obtains *success*, sometimes the other. They charge their customers twenty per cent. more for the plate-glass, or else they become bankrupt."

"But the latter is ruin," said the chevalier.

"*Scoosy!*" replied Joey Pike, "it is the first step towards making a fortune. No tradesman ought to think of keeping more than a one-horse chay before he becomes bankrupt, but afterwards he may set up a pair."

"I suppose," rejoined the chevalier, "that the latter is the general alternative then, for very few customers will be fools enough to give twenty per cent. more for goods because they are exhibited behind plate-glass."

"*Pardonnez moi, monsieur*," replied Joey, in a sweet tone; "I believe they might put on thirty. We are all the slaves of our eyes; and as they say, one may catch larks with a mirror, so you may catch customers in London with plate-glass."

"I think I shall beg of the proprietors," said the chevalier, "to put up in the window, tickets for the moon to be had within."

"They would have a *vente prodigieuse*," said Joey: "people would buy thousands of them out of mere curiosity."

"What! would curiosity carry them to the moon?" demanded the chevalier.

"It has taken many a man and woman too to a worse place," said Joey, and on the chevalier walked ruminating upon all he saw and heard.

On his arrival at the Golden-cross he found Worrel seated with a portly man of a dull and self-conceited countenance, who was instantly introduced to him as Mr. Lillywhite, the editor of the well-known Pansophisticon newspaper of science and literature. He loaded the chevalier with civilities, gave him an invitation to his house, (which the chevalier at once accepted,) and as he was taking leave whispered,

“If you could write something, *exclusively*, for our paper; a letter from abroad, a tour in the moon, the review of some of your principal lunatic productions, a totally new view of astronomy, or, if you have yourself dabbled in a literary way, a laudatory article of your own work, we shall be delighted to give it insertion. Think of it, think of it, we are capital pay. Think of it till we meet again. Won't you and Mr. Worrel dine with me some day soon?”

Worrel begged leave to decline, saying that his mind was not in a state to enjoy society. But the chevalier accepted again, and the worthy fat gentleman rolled out of the room.

CHAPTER XXI.

A QUESTION REGARDING LAURA LONGMORE ANSWERED—SHE IS FORGOTTEN BY THOSE WHO OUGHT TO HAVE REMEMBERED HER—SHE APPLIES TO THE BELL AND PRODUCES TWO MAID SERVANTS—THE REASON WHY THE MAIDS IN OUTRUN CASTLE HUNTED IN COUPLES—LAURA PASSES A DULL DAY AND FINDS THE NIGHT COLD—SHE REVERSES THE PROPOSITION OF GIVING UP THE GHOST—IN HER SPIRITUAL CAPACITY SHE KNOCKS DOWN JERRY TRIPE AND STRIKES A SPARK OUT OF HIM.

AND what had become of Laura Longmore all this time? The question is certainly a very pertinent one and shall be answered as speedily as possible. We left her, as the reader may remember—if not exactly in her night-gear, certainly not much better clothed than when she went to bed—in the midst of the state apartment of Outrun Castle, wondering what she could be brought there for, and troubling her brain to very little purpose to devise some motive for the peer's conduct. Laura, as the reader perhaps may have some suspicion, though a dear tender-hearted little creature with all the soft graces and womanly sweetness that make a young girl of her years the most pleasant thing on earth, had likewise a considerable portion of good common sense, and—though she was certainly not more than a-third of her father's age—she possessed at least three times his knowledge of the world. She therefore speedily rejected the idea which at first suggested itself to her mind under the influence of terror, that the noble viscount had carried her off out of revenge for the death of his son, and that he would inflict upon her some very grievous punishment. She soon convinced herself that he had some more worldly object in view, though what that was she could not divine, and whether he intended to marry her himself or what else he could possibly design to do with her was a question which puzzled her very much indeed. She sat down in the great arm-chair before the fire, she toasted the pretty little foot that was without a slipper in the glow of the blazing logs, she looked back to the fine old bedstead with its magnificent hangings, she gazed at the large old trunk filled with antique linen, and she ran her eye over the garments which

had been hung up to air, and whichever way she turned she asked herself with a bewildered mind, "What can it all mean?"

She could make nothing of it, however: it seemed to her the most strange and inconsistent act that ever was performed, and she was fain to wait for the promised return of the noble lord in the hope of obtaining some satisfactory explanation. As we have shown, however, for a considerable time his lordship forgot his charge altogether, and in consultations and potations deep with his honourable son and Tom Hamilton, spent nearly an hour, while poor Laura knew not what to do, or which way to turn herself. The thing that decided her was the fire getting low, for the large brown logs soon dwindled down into long red firebrands, and the long red firebrands in time sank into white powder and glowing embers. It is wonderful how often habit acts much better than reason. Simply as a matter of custom, on seeing that the fire was declining Laura put out her hand seized the large embroidered satin bell-rope, and gave it a pull. This act instantly produced a sound such as no other bell-rope in the house would have called forth. The bell with which it corresponded was a very old one, but unlike many other old *belles*, it had a very sweet and silvery, but solemn voice, soft, yet penetrating, so that, although it rang at a great distance in the housekeeper's room, Laura herself heard it, and started she did not well know why.

At the moment that Laura pulled the bell-rope three maids were in the housekeeper's room giving the respectable functionary to whom it belonged an opportunity of playing first fiddle in a gossiping concert. All four started and looked up at the bell, and the housekeeper exclaimed,

"It's the state-room bell! Run up, Jane, and see what the young lady wants."

Jane hesitated, and looked as if she would rather not, and the housekeeper, who had a fund of compassion for all human infirmities, and was just such a jolly old soul as might be supposed to act in good harmony with Mr. Jeremy Tripe, added, observing her doubtful look,

"Well, you foolish girl, if you're afraid, Nelly will go, she's a heart of oak, and would defy any ghost in Christendom!"

"Please, ma'am, I'd rather Sarah went with me," said Nelly Thomson, notwithstanding the courage which the housekeeper ascribed to her, and so it was settled, Sarah, otherwise Sally, accompanying Miss Thomson to the state chamber, each looking forward with very wide eyes along the passages after they had passed a certain turn of the staircase.

"Lawk, Sally, how you are a puffing," said Nelly Thomson, as they approached the door; why there's nothing to be afraid on."

"I don't know that," said Sally, in a solemn tone; "and if there ain't, why did you make me come with you, Nell?"

Now let us pause to hold up our hands and eyes in astonishment at the wonderful precision, accuracy, and brevity of this our history, which contains not a word that will not be found in the end absolutely necessary to the right understanding of the story. It is miraculous, it is sublime, it is transcendental; we are lost in admiration of our-

selves. Let not the reader vainly think, when he finds what he imagines a superfluous description, an incident that seems unnecessary, a character that appears to hang loose, an uncalled for elaboration, a stupid piece of philosophy, a *longueur* in short of any kind; let him not vainly suppose that it was without its object, but strangling the incipient yawn between his teeth, let him look forward to the climax, to the consummation of the whole, where he will find that the most minute circumstance, the most trifling word, down to the redness of Jerry Tripe's nose to an "*an*," to a "*the*," bear directly and strikingly upon the end in view.

Did we not, dear reader, tell you, as we described the approach of the Chevalier de Lunatico on his visit to Outrun Castle, that one wing of the house was in utter darkness? Did we not describe a certain ruinous look about the place? Did we not endeavour to produce in your mind that feeling of awful expectation which is created by the blue lights in Don Giovanni just before the ghost appears? and could we have any other object in view than that of preparing you to hear that the dark wing of the castle had the terrible reputation of being haunted?

Such, then, was the case with the whole of that suit of rooms, passages, galleries, corridors, and staircases, of which the state apartment was the first, and such was the cause of the agitation and alarm exhibited by the two maidens. Presenting themselves, then, in a couple to poor Laura Longmore, they dropped two curtseys one rapidly following the other, and asked her what she wanted.

"In the first place," she said, "I want some more wood upon the fire, and in the next place, I want to know if Lord Outrun is coming, as he promised, to give me some explanation of the conduct pursued towards me."

"I'll see directly, Miss," said Nelly Thomson.

"I'll see directly, Miss," said her companion, in a still more nervous and agitated tone.

Both went out for a moment, both came in again bearing a large basket of wood, both made up the fire, and both once more retreated, taking care to lock the door behind them. Proceeding immediately in search of the viscount, they found that he was in the chamber of the ex-corpse, and thither Nelly Thomson and Sarah took their way: Nell, who was in the secret, understanding the whole matter very well; but Sarah, who was in the dark respecting Mr. Fitzurse's resuscitation, thinking it very odd that her lord, who was not fond of grave subjects, should keep company with his dead son more than necessary. Her surprise was still more increased on hearing loud peals of laughter proceeding from the chamber of death. Being, really, a good and feeling girl, she paused upon the stairs, while her companion went on and knocked at the door. Thereupon, in about a minute the peer's head was protruded, demanding what the devil she wanted. On hearing her errand he seemed surprised, and it must be owned a little shocked.

"By jingo, I had forgot her altogether," he exclaimed—poor little soul, what's to be done? D—n it, take her up a bottle of Madeira

and a cold fowl, or something of that kind. Tell her to make herself comfortable, and go to bed and sleep, and I'll come and see her to-morrow."

The maid did as she was bid, still accompanied by Sarah; and poor Laura Longmore having no other resource, followed the peer's advice so far as going to bed was concerned. The next day proved a very unsatisfactory one to her; for, although she received every attendance and comfort that maid-servants could give her—though breakfast, dinner, coffee, tea, and the peer's grand panacea of champagne, were liberally supplied—Lord Outrun came not himself, nor did he send any message. The door was regularly locked upon her; and neither threats, entreaties, persuasions, nor promises, would induce the maids to give her the means of escaping from the duration in which she was held.

Partly by way of amusing herself, partly from the necessity of her case, Laura was obliged to examine a portion of the contents of the large trunk which had been brought in to the state chamber, and apply some of the apparel that it contained to her own use—smiling at the quaint and antiquated form of the garments, and taking care to cover the whole that she thought fit to put on, with her own smart little dressing-gown. The greater part of the day was passed at the window, which looked over the park, but which afforded not the slightest prospect of escape, so high was it from the ground.

For some hours the poor prisoner kept up her spirits pretty well; but as night came on she began to get low and melancholy, and imagination filled the chamber with spectres of many unpleasant things. Now, let not the reader make a mistake: the spectres that she saw were not of the kind that the maid-servants of Outrun Castle dreaded; for Laura had lived too long amongst telescopes and electrical machines to have any very great respect for ghosts. No: she saw Harry Worrel surrounded with all sorts of difficulty, dangers, and discomforts—she saw him in agony at her loss, and she appreciated very justly, from the feelings of her own heart what were actually the feelings of his. She saw her father's despair at the idea of her death, and she was grieved to think that that despair would be aggravated by the knowledge that his last acts towards her had not been those of kindness. It was with visions of this kind that she peopled the room; and as she sat watching the embers of the fire, while hour after hour of darkness went by, she felt cold and chilly, and tried in vain to warm herself by piling up the wood till it blazed on high. She was still in hopes that Lord Outrun would keep his promise. She knew that his habits were late, and she was, consequently, not disposed to go to bed till all chance of the visit was over. She looked round, therefore, for something to cast over her shoulders, and remembering the box of old apparel, she went to it, and searched for something that might shelter her from the cold. After removing two or three articles of lace and linen, she came to what seemed to have been a ball dress of light grey satin, cut in an antique shape, of a fashion even more remote than the rest of the apparel, and close underneath it a small black mantilla with a hood, which she instantly seized upon as the thing she

wanted. Before she put it on, however, she stood for a moment contemplating the satin dress, and, as in moments of temporary depression, the monitory convictions which all arrive at in the end of their days of the vanity of our joys, and the still greater vanity of our amusements, come, like dark shadows, into the sunshiny presence of youth, even gay and happy Laura Longmore—happy in the cheerful summer of an innocent heart—asked herself sadly who was the being who had borne that garment to ball or pageant, of play or merry-making—who was she? what had been her fate? where was she now? It seemed as if the mantilla and the gown had been laid by immediately after having been worn, and she was seized with a strong desire of putting them on together, which, as there was nothing to prevent it, she soon accomplished, and then gazed at herself in the large cheval glass, and smiled to see what a quaint old figure she had made of herself.

“Now,” she thought, “if Lord Outrun comes, I shall be dressed to receive him;” and down she sat again before the fire, and waited till the clock chimed the half hour.

“Half-past eleven!” said Laura to herself; “he will surely not come now. It is very cold: I wonder where that wind comes from. It blows in with a terrible draught.”

Thus thinking, she rose and approached the side of the room from which the current of air seemed to proceed. The chamber was lined with large panels of old oak, bordered with immense garlands of very well carved flowers, and where the draft came from became evident in a moment. There was a key-hole big enough to have satisfied any lord chamberlain in Europe, and an ebony handle, which, from its colour, Laura had not distinguished from the rest of the old carving. Her heart beat when she saw it; but do not let the reader suppose that the pretty little heroine of this chapter was one of those ladies who could faint with apprehension at the sudden sight of a brass knocker, or even the ebony handle of a lock. Her heart beat, but it was with the thought that this key-hole and this handle might give her the means of making her escape.

“They may not have locked this door,” said Laura to herself, “though they have locked the other;” and instantly putting her hand upon the friendly ebony, she turned it with some little difficulty, pushed gently, and the door opened without resistance.

Before her lay a short corridor, and by the dim light that suddenly flashed down it from the room in which she was, she saw clearly enough to distinguish that there was the balustrade of a staircase at the end. Laura had well nigh clapped her hands with joy, but just at that moment, a distant door banged, and saying to herself “He is coming,” she closed the door with all speed, and getting back to her chair, sat down by the fire, and looked as demure as possible.

All was silent, however, and though Laura remained in the same position for at least a quarter of an hour, not the slightest sound gave warning of the approach of any one.

“I will see where that leads to before I sleep,” said Laura; “and though, perhaps, I cannot get away to-night, I will not be long ere I find an opportunity.”

She waited a quarter of an hour more, and then after having counted the clock strike twelve, she rose, and as the first precaution, bolted the principal door of the room in the inside.

"He will never come now," she thought, "and if he do, he will think I am in bed and asleep."

The next question was, should she take with her a little hand lamp which the maids had left with her to burn during the night, but she instantly negated this in her own mind, saying, "the candles will throw light enough down the passage for the first attempt; I can come back for the lamp if I need it." She then opened the lesser door cautiously, placed a chair against it to keep it from closing behind her, and after listening for a moment or two with a throbbing bosom, but without hearing any sound, she advanced with a gliding stealthy pace along the corridor, and reached the top of the staircase. There was a tall window above it, through which the moon was now streaming clearly, and by her bright light Laura descended slowly till she came within two or three steps of the bottom. At that instant, however, a door exactly opposite burst suddenly open, and a stout, jovial-looking man, with a long red nose, rushed in with a light in his hand. The first thing that presented itself to his eyes was Laura, in her old-fashioned grey satin gown, and black mantilla, with the hood drawn over her head, and the clear moonlight streaming full upon her. For an instant she stood rivetted to the step, as if turned into marble, but the next moment recovering her presence of mind, she determined to ask for the viscount, and waving her hand with graceful dignity, she said, in her sweet silvery voice, "Tell me where is ——"

She got no farther, however, before Jerry Tripe, who had stood shivering and gazing at her with a face that had but one red spot left in it, let fall the lamp, sank upon his knees, and, clasping his hands, exclaimed, "Oh, my lady, ma'am! I haven't got it! It's old Scapulary—he that's murdered!" and down he fell upon his face in a fainting fit.

Laura, at once comprehended that she was taken for a ghost, and although the words she had heard excited her curiosity not a little, she was wise enough to take advantage of the moment of the butler's fainting, to dart up the stairs again like lightning, and run along the corridor to her own room. She paused, however, to secure the key which was on the outside of the door, and just as she was closing it, the wisdom of the course she had pursued was proved to her satisfaction, by a thick jolly voice ascending from the stairs she had just quitted in somewhat drunken tones, and exclaiming, "Come, Jerry, give us t'other bottle—my lord will never know—why d——n, it's tripped his heels!—He's drunk!—Ha! ha! ha!—Whoever saw good liquor get the better of Jerry Tripe before?"

Laura stayed to hear no more, but closed the door, locked it, hid the key in the most secret place she could find, and putting by the grey satin dress and mantilla carefully for further use, went to bed, and remained thinking what the butler's words could mean, till she fell asleep.



UOR M

Ferry Drape meets with a Spirit not to be trusted.

1901

CHAPTER XXII.

THE EVILS OF LACKEYISM—A DISCOURSE WITH THE MINISTER—ARGUMENTATION UPON WAYS AND MEANS—THE SWEETS OF OFFICE.

PRAY, reader, put on your seven-league boots, and take four steps with them from Outrun to London. The despondency under which poor Worrel laboured, as we before described, seemed rather to increase than to diminish; and when Mr. Lillywhite was gone, the chevalier turning round beheld him with his eyes covered over by his hand, plunged into a deep and painful reverie. It grieved the kind heart of our commissioner not a little to see him in this state; but being a wise and prudent man, he knew that grief must have its way for a certain time, and although he resolved to reason with him on the subject, he thought it would be best to postpone his homily till such time as he could talk with him more at large: it being now his purpose, as we have hinted, to go at once to pay a visit to one of the ministers. Breakfasting hastily, the chevalier procured a conveyance and rolled away to the house of the great man, desiring rather to see him in his own private residence than at his office. Joey Pike was upon the box of the coach, and took pains to announce his master as "Son Excellence le Chevalier de Lunatico;" but if there be any truth in the old proverb of like master like man, our worthy friend did not seem likely to meet with a very cordial reception. The minister's servant gazed over Joey with a cold, stiff, supercilious look—such as some hard old Etruscan in bronze might be supposed to put on when viewing the Venus de Medici. He only deigned at first to utter two words which were, "By appointment!" and receiving a negative, he added three more, "Not at home!" After which he was shutting the door in order to retire to his arm-chair in the hall window, without even waiting to see if the carriage drove off.

"Stop a moment," said the chevalier, putting his head out and speaking in a tone of authority. "Be so good as to take that note to your master immediately, and that card, and tell him that the gentleman who gave them to you is waiting his leisure."

"But, sir——," said the servant in a tone considerably more humble.

"Don't *but* me, sir," replied the chevalier in an imperious manner, very well knowing how to deal with a Jack-in-office; "don't but me, but do as I order you."

The porter turned to a man out of livery who was now appearing through a pair of folding doors, and delivered over to him the note, the card, and the message. The other retired with it, and soon after re-appeared, inviting the chevalier in courteous tones to come in. Mr. de Lunatico descended from the vehicle with a slow and sedate step—made a few observations to Joey Pike in a low tone, as if he were giving him orders upon which the safety of the universe depended—

and then entered the house with a grave and thoughtful air, seeming scarcely to see that there were two such beings on the earth as the lackeys who now stood reverentially at the doors. The reader will clearly perceive by all this that the chevalier was an old diplomatist. The lackeys, however, had their revenge, for they showed him into an anteroom, where he was doomed to wait for a full hour; while the great man, who was very busy with a pet spaniel bitch, concluded the affairs of the morning to his own satisfaction. At length, however, he received a summons; and the servant who conveyed it was disappointed to find that the commissioner, having met with paper, pens, and ink upon the table, was just as busily engaged as if he had been in his own writing-room. Four sheets had he covered with his own particular language; and after deliberately folding them up and putting them into his pocket, he followed to the room of the minister.

We will not describe him minutely, as the chevalier has done: for, although we have before asserted, and repeat, that every individual herein mentioned—except the chevalier, Harry, Laura, Joey, and Tom Hamilton—from the beggar of a few pages back to the minister at present under our hands, is defunct, dead, gone to his ancestors—and every one has ancestors of some kind, such as they are—yet, as the charitable public is so fond of fitting every man with a cap, whether it be his own or not, we should doubtless have Mr. de Lunatico's description clapped upon the head of some poor little, unoffending minister, and patted down to make it fit the better.

The honourable secretary received his visitor with cold and froglike civility, looked at him askance, and begged him to be seated. Doubtless, he thought he was come to ask him some favour, and got all his prickles up like a hedgehog, to repel him at every point. But scarcely had he set eyes upon him, when the chevalier's powers began to have their effect: an unwilling smile came upon his countenance; and he who had never for the last ten or twelve years of his life displayed his own motives and purposes to any one—no, not to himself,—felt an irresistible desire to pour them all forth into the ear of his new acquaintance without concealment or reserve. After inquiring about the health of his old acquaintance, Mr. Longmore, he proceeded to ask what brought Mr. de Lunatico to London; and, on hearing that it was to inquire into the habits and character of the people in general, he shook his head with a laugh, saying, "You will find us a sad mad race, chevalier."

"So I suppose," answered the chevalier drily.

"Oh yes," continued the minister, "there is every sort of madness in England, which makes the English people the most easily governed upon the face of the earth by any man who knows how to turn their insanities to his own advantage."

"Indeed!" said the chevalier. "I had heard that you found it rather more difficult to manage them, and were very likely soon to be driven from office."

"Oh, dear no!" replied the minister; "we have a thousand shifts et unfried ere it comes to that. The fact is, we have let agitation et to a somewhat low pitch lately, which is a great error certainly;

for, as we live by exciting the passions of the people, we ought never to let them cool for a moment."

"And, pray, how came you to commit this oversight?" asked the chevalier.

"Why," replied his companion, "the fact is, the people were starving, so some of my poor foolish colleagues thought it necessary to let them have a little repose, with a view to the revival of trade; for agitation, you know, is utterly destructive of commerce and national prosperity. But what signifies to us, my dear sir, commerce, or national prosperity, or any thing else of that kind, so that we ourselves keep in, and exclude the other party? That is the grand object of a statesman's laudable ambition. I say laudable advisedly; for, although there be some fools who blame this pertinacious adherence to place, and think that no man ought to sacrifice the great interests of the country for the purpose of maintaining himself in power, yet I am perfectly ready to show that he is not only justified in so doing, but most extremely praiseworthy also."

"I do not see the process by which you could arrive at such a conclusion," replied the chevalier.

"The simplest in the world," answered the statesman. "I fully and firmly believe that the measures and the principles of myself and my friends are those which alone can insure the maintenance and extension of political liberty in this country. We look upon political liberty to be the great paramount object to be desired, and, consequently, it is perfectly right and expedient in us to maintain ourselves in power by any means, as the only possible way of carrying out those principles which we hold to be indispensable. It is for this cause that we have suffered ourselves to be driven one way by one body of men, another way by another—that we have purchased their support by conceding every thing that we once opposed as heinous and wrong; and that I am ready myself to-morrow, seeing that it is absolutely necessary to get up a new agitation, to array class against class, and put myself at the head of an onslaught upon one of the most influential and estimable bodies of the people, in order that, carried forward by the current, we may still ride on the top of the wave, even though we have no power of directing its course."

"But do you not think," said the chevalier, "that such a step may produce revolution and anarchy, and give that faction which I find is called the Paperists—who are now considered little better than madmen—an opportunity of venting their fury upon all institutions whatsoever, and overturning all things?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied the minister; "it may come to that at last: but, if it does, we will throw the blame upon our opponents, and say that it was their resistance of all rational reform, their adherence to monopoly and class interest that did all the mischief."

"But you yourselves will know better," said the chevalier. "You will be aware that it was for the sole purpose of keeping yourselves in power that you created an excitement and agitation which was to end in such desperate consequences."

"Oh, dear no," replied the statesman; "we shall have no difficulty

in persuading ourselves that we acted with the most disinterested and liberal views. I have written and spoken a thousand times against the very measures I am now about to propose; but I have now fully convinced myself that the time is come for adopting them; besides, it will be a long time, in all probability, before the riot and anarchy you talk about takes place. Things will last our day, I don't doubt, and that is quite enough for us. Let us live our time, and *apres nous, le déluge.*"

"May I ask," said the chevalier, "if it be not an impertinent question, whether you have any qualms of conscience, or any misgivings in regard to the perfect sapience of your schemes and purposes?"

"Qualms of conscience!" exclaimed the minister. "Oh no! Such a thing as that is quite out of the question. He is but a chicken statesman who can experience such foolish things as qualms of conscience. If a piece of business goes wrong—if two or three thousand farmers are ruined—if a score or two of merchants break—if an army is swept away by pestilence or the sword—if a set of misguided men choose to take up something which I have said in a speech, break out into insurrection, and get themselves shot—if a town is half burnt down by the mob, following out the doctrine of agitation a little farther than is expedient, what is that to me? I have nothing to do with it: I did the best I could under circumstances, and I don't care a straw for what comes after. As to entertaining any misgivings, that would be more foolish still. I am not a man, depend upon it, to have any doubt of my own capabilities. There is nothing I entertain any hesitation upon in the world. I am quite ready at any time to make up my mind on any subject under the sun. Give me half an hour, and I will draw up a bill for remodelling *in toto* the English constitution—and no fear if I do so but that I shall find plenty of reasons wherewith to defend that bill in parliament, as well as plenty of people ready to support it. Nothing like a *coup de maitre* in such things: there is something bright and brilliant in acting boldly and without hesitation. Besides, our party have a great advantage in the course we are pursuing. As we always profess to be friends of progress, there is no reason why we should not condemn a measure most bitterly one year, and advocate it the next. We can always say that the time is come for granting what was before denied. Thus we have but one thing on earth to consider, and that is, whether the thing that is proposed is convenient to us. You will easily see that no great time is necessary to decide such a question as that."

‡ "Assuredly not," replied the chevalier; "but let me ask, although you seem to consider your tenure of office as perfectly secure, what would you do, what plan would you follow, if your opponents were to be successful, and were to snatch from you the power which you have held so long?"

"I don't think they could hold it for six weeks," replied the minister. "In the first place, they would find the country plunged into such a sea of embarrassments, our foreign relations so entangled, our commerce so depressed, our public burdens so heavy, our revenue so deficient, our expenditure so increased, that it would be utterly

impossible for them to keep the state going without offending some of the very classes by whom they are supported. For the last ten years we have been in a leaky boat in which we have made ten holes, while we have patched up one, and now the vessel is so nearly up to the gunnel that I defy any new men to keep her afloat. Besides, if we found we were going, we should of course contrive to increase the embarrassments for our successors; so as to drive them into some odious measures at once. We would sweep up every crumb of patronage, and even, if possible, forestal it; and we would take care to go out upon some measure which would give us an opportunity of agitating the country from end to end. Thus we would secure unpopularity to our adversaries, popularity to ourselves, and the means of always saying, 'You see, you have been able to do nothing more than we did.'

"Place and power must certainly be very delightful," said the chevalier.

The minister paused doubtfully, murmuring at length, "I suppose they are; and yet the labour, and the trouble, and the ceaseless petty annoyances, the continual wretchedness of an office by day, and the wordy warfare of a house of parliament by night, are not things which are very much to be desired, especially when the salary is but a mere trifle, not half so much in fact as every doctor and every lawyer makes without half the trouble and annoyance: but then again, my dear chevalier, there is the gratification of the two strongest principles in our nature—pride and vanity. To be the great man, to bestow little favours on those who support us, to browbeat or treat with cold contempt the vast multitude of those we love not, to be looked up to with fear and trembling by thousands of hungry expectants, to have an opportunity of mortifying the vanity of multitudes of our dear friends—O yes, believe me, there is a charm about power which makes it well worth possessing. But now, my dear chevalier, I must leave you, for it is time I should go to my office. When will you dine with me? You are a very clever man I see, and I am quite sure a liberal at your heart. Is it not so?"

"Oh, we are all liberal in my country," replied the chevalier. "It is the native land of liberalism, and we give ready welcome amongst us to all those men who think that people who can neither read nor write, nor compound a common sentence in their mother tongue, are fit to select legislators. A number of other classes not quite so decided in their views, are also popular amongst us when they are sincere; but I fear you gentlemen who only use liberalism as a means to an end would not be treated with the same civility."

"Indeed!" said the statesman. "Nevertheless, I should like to talk the subject over more fully, if you will give me an opportunity. When can you dine with me? To-morrow is a cabinet dinner day, so we cannot admit you; but the day after, if you are disengaged, at a quarter before eight."

"I will not fail," replied the chevalier; and taking the hint to depart, he bowed and left the statesman to proceed upon his avocations.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ONE SYSTEM OF REVIEWING—WORREL HINTS THAT THERE ARE OTHER ONES AND BETTER—A VISIT TO A POLICE OFFICE—WORSHIPFUL EQUITY—NEWS FROM THE COUNTRY—THE CHEVALIER BEGINS TO SEE DAY LIGHT.

ON returning from the house of the minister to the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, the chevalier found his young companion, Worrel, precisely where he had left him, with his head leaning on his hand, and his eyes fixed upon the table, tearless, but full of sorrow.

"My dear young friend," said the chevalier, in a kindly and feeling tone, "I grieve with you and for you; but, indeed, you must not indulge in this sadness—for a time you cannot be expected to do otherwise; but if it goes on in this manner, rather increasing than diminishing, I shall be obliged, against my will, to give you a billet for the moon!"

Worrel smiled faintly.

"I shall be very much obliged to you," said he; "for in another sphere I might, perhaps, learn to forget."

"Oh, no," answered the chevalier, "such is not the case. Life is remembrance! Did we forget in another world that which we have known in this, we might as well, to all intents and purposes, be different beings. But what I mean to say is, simply, that grief, when long indulged and pampered, is lunacy. When at the end of your life—where you may hope to meet her you love again—if you look back to this moment, the intervening space which now seems so long, will dwindle to a point, and you will find how foolish it was to repine at such a short period of separation."

Worrel shook his head; for the moony consolations of the chevalier had as little effect upon him as those of this earth in general. He resolved, however, to make an effort, and rising from the table, he said—

"Well, I will do my best to occupy my mind. I will go out with you, if you like, to the office of the Pansophisticon, and see Mr. Lillywhite.

"He seems a very good-humoured, stupid sort of person," said the chevalier.

"Stupid enough," replied Worrel, "but good-humoured he is not; for in that fat carcase lies as much malice as would furnish forth forty reviewers; he has not wit enough to wield it himself, but he finds plenty to help him; and, most likely, just at this hour, there will be a little knot of them gathered together who may afford you some amusement."

According to the elegant expression of one of our fine wits, the chevalier, as our readers know, was "up to any thing from pitch-

and-toss to manslaughter;" and in five minutes he and Worrel were at the door of what was called the office of the Pansophisticon.

They were admitted to a small parlour behind the office, where they found, seated in the chair of state, and with his hat on, Mr. Lillywhite himself; while round about the table were grouped a party of gentlemen, with keen and hungry faces, all looking very eager and impatient of interruption. Mr. Lillywhite himself, however, received them cordially, and then proceeded to introduce to the chevalier a rather smart-looking personage, with a shrill, shrivelled voice, called Mr. Spratt; a thin, squeaking, wizened, white-faced, black-coated, white neck-clothed spectre, as the Rev. Mr. Grumbledyke; a short-set, pale, stoutish, man, in a bright blue satin stock, with a world of fun in his clear grey eyes, as Dr. O'Keen; and a heavy-looking morose personage, with an indescribable expression of unprincipled cunning, and self-conceit, as *the celebrated* Mr. Darkness. Now, it so happened, that neither the chevalier nor Harry Worrel were at all aware of why Mr. Darkness was celebrated, in which case might be found nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand, throughout all Europe. But Mr. Darkness happened to be the great man for the movement of the Pansophisticon. He transfused, with wonderful facility, the same low unprincipled cunning and self-satisfaction that shone upon his countenance, to the pages of the journal; he conferred upon it that air of saucy, *tranchant* confidence of its own opinions which is so excessively useful to a review, and which was so highly admired by Mr. Lillywhite himself; and, therefore, it was, that the worthy proprietor and editor always called him *the celebrated* Darkness.

All the other gentlemen received the visitors with politeness, at least, and with the air of wishing to be civil; but Darkness viewed them with supercilious contempt, and resisted, as far as he could, the influence of the chevalier's peculiar powers. It is true, he could not resist very long, but he began by cutting the compliments of Mr. Lillywhite short, saying—

"Come, come, Lillywhite, let us proceed with business. This insolence must be chastised—his book must be damned, double damned, if possible. We must cut it up, root and branch."

"Certainly, certainly," said Lillywhite. "The idea of his impugning the judgment of the Pansophisticon——"

"Some very bad book, indeed, I suppose," said the chevalier, in a low tone, addressing Dr. O'Keen, who sat beside him. "Something very immoral and horrible, doubtless."

"Faith, not at all," said the doctor, with a sweet touch of brogue on the tip of his tongue; "it's as good a book, and as clever a book, and as pleasant a book as ever was written; but you see it must be damned—more's the pity!"

"And, pray, why must it be damned?" demanded the chevalier. "It appears that Mr. Darkness and Mr. Lillywhite entertain a very different opinion of its merits."

"Oh, no! not at all," replied Doctor O'Keen; "they think just the same as I do, in their hearts. Darkness does not very well know

what's good and what's bad; but, impudent blockhead as he is, he is well enough aware that all he has been saying about this book is false. Lillywhite will explain all, if you ask him."

The chevalier thereupon ventured to interrupt the conversation that was going on between the editor and Mr. Darkness. Putting a question to the former as to his reasons for so potently condemning this said book.

"Why, you see, sir," said Mr. Lillywhite, "this is a man that affects to hold his head high, and not to court the reviewers. He pretended when the Pansophisticon was struggling to destroy a contemporary journal—he pretended, I say, that he would neither seek its praise nor blame; but now that we have got the upper hand, and have our sow (the public) by the ear, we are determined to show him what we can do. So when this book came out—after he had spent three or four years in composing it—I first read it myself, and as it was so very good I dared not put it into any inferior hands, for fear they should not be able to damn it heartily; but I gave it to Darkness, who, I know, is as skilful in finding a flaw as a lawyer, and in making one where there is none as a plumber. We'll smash him; won't we, Darkness? we'll smash him for the honour of the Pansophisticon."

"Ay, that we will," said Darkness, rubbing his hands. "I will cut him to atoms. I will get up all the histories of the times, and see if I don't pick a hole in his coat somewhere."

"But," said the chevalier, putting his hand into his breeches pocket, and pulling out one of the little cards of admission to the moon, with which he had now supplied himself from his portmanteau: "but one thing is very clear to me, Mr. Lillywhite, and you must not be offended at my saying so. It is self evident that you must very soon ruin your paper altogether, if you employ writers to condemn that which both they and you know to be good. The public must sooner or later discover that such is the case, that what you praise is bad, that what you blame is excellent, and that personal favour or dislike is the due basis of your judgment. They will soon find this out, I say, and, having found it out, will give you up and read a paper better worthy of confidence. The act, my dear sir, is one of insanity, and therefore you must excuse my begging your acceptance of this ticket for the moon, where you will meet with a hearty welcome any time ere six months be over."

Mr. Lillywhite opened his eyes till they looked like oysters; and Mr. Darkness exclaimed—

"Hallo! what's this? The foolish fellow will be giving me one next."

"No, sir," replied the chevalier; "there lies a considerable difference hid under those two monosyllables, *mad* and *bad*. You gratify your malice without running any risk, without injuring your reputation, or your purse, or aught else; but our worthy friend here risks his property, by sacrificing the good opinion of all honest and intelligent men. So depend upon it he requires to be removed to another sphere."

"Fiddle, faddle," replied Mr. Darkness. "Honest and intelligent

men forsooth! Who ever thinks of writing for honest and intelligent men? Why there's not enough of them in all England to pay for the paper and print. Every man likes to hear his neighbour abused, right or wrong. Satire, slander, abuse, these are the things that sell. What signifies to nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand whether they have a just opinion of a book or not, so long as they are made to laugh, or are amused or pleased in any way by the review they read. Truth! who cares any thing for the truth but the Duke of Wellington? Come, come, take back your ticket, old gentleman: we can't spare Lillywhite; he feeds us all capitally."

"I am sorry," replied the chevalier; "but as your only argument is, that all the rest of the world are as mad as he, I am afraid that will make no difference in my opinion. Good day, gentlemen: good day Signor Lillywhite; you and I will meet again, at all events—in the moon."

"The vagabond! throw an inkstand at his head," cried Darkness.

"Knack heem down!" said Spratt.

"Phoo! don't make a row," cried Dr. O'Keen, who was the only man at all likely to have recourse to manual operations in case of real offence; and the chevalier left the room, in company with his friend.

"Pray," demanded Mr. de Lunatico, as he issued forth into the street, "are all your reviewers and editors of reviews of the same stamp? If they be, I shall have to distribute a good many tickets I think."

"Oh, no," answered Worrel; "very far from it. There is a clique of low, vulgar, ignorant men, who make their bread in this way, feeding the worst portion of the public with abuse of every thing but that which is written by themselves or their friends; and as they have some half-dozen papers amongst them they have a considerable effect, not in purifying literature and elevating its tone, but in degrading and depressing it. But there are, on the contrary, a number of gentlemen of high feeling, strong talent, and profound learning engaged in the various branches of criticism, whose writings—weekly, monthly, and quarterly—tend greatly to afford an antidote to the other poisonous stream that is constantly pouring forth upon the public. It is not possible to suppose, of course, that these gentlemen will not like the book of a friend better than that of an enemy; but making allowances for human frailty, they judge upon the whole justly. But as you have now been to one of our literary courts, will you accompany me to one of our police tribunals? There is one at no very great distance, and you have a hackney coach at the door."

The chevalier willingly assented; but when Joey Pike, who had accompanied the vehicle, was told to order it to —, the poor youth looked so picturesquely miserable, that the chevalier comprehended at once the apprehensions which took possession of him, and gave him leave to return home while he and Worrel proceeded on their way.

The sitting magistrate received the two gentlemen with instantaneous urbanity. The moment his eye lighted upon the cheva-

lier his heart expanded towards him, and he requested that he and his young friend would come up and take their seats beside him. It was his custom, he said, with all distinguished foreigners. He then, though struggling with an anxious desire to communicate every thing in a breath to his fascinating acquaintance, proceeded to inquire into the case of a young gentleman who was brought before him, fashionably attired, and bearing upon his face an air of swaggering insolence, as well as a pair of neat black mustachoes, with a pair of brass spurs to correspond upon his heels. The charge against him was, that he had been found drunk in the street very late on the preceding night; that he had assaulted and grievously insulted a respectable tradesman's wife, and afterwards knocked down more than one policeman who attempted to capture him. He seemed somewhat anxious at the present moment to conceal his name, though he treated the whole case with great haughtiness. The poor woman who had been ill used, said she did not wish to urge any thing harsh against his lordship, and the culprit's name being sent up privately to the magistrate, instantly produced a great change on his worship's countenance. The chevalier expected to hear some very severe and terrible award, and whispered to Worrel—

“Of course he will make the punishment proportionate to the education, rank, and circumstances of the criminal; for that which is pardonable in the ignorant, the poor, and those who have neither rank nor a respectable station in society, becomes a heinous offence in the well-educated, untempted man of rank and fortune, who has every inducement to do right and to avoid evil.”

But the magistrate merely said, that as the complainant did not wish to press the case, he should fine the prisoner five shillings for being drunk, and discharge him. No surprise was expressed in court at this decision; and some persons, indeed, seemed to think the magistrate a very severe and Aristides-like sort of gentleman, for laying a tax upon the drunkenness of aristocracy.

“Does this happen always?” asked the chevalier, in a low voice, of Harry Worrel.

“No, no,” replied his companion, “it was once universal; and a gentleman, notwithstanding the assumed equality of all men in the eye of the law, might commit every sort of brutality unpunished, except by some trifling fine for which he cared not at all. Several of our magistrates, however, are now broaching the curious opinion, that the station aggravates the offence.”

The attention of the chevalier was at that instant called away to two little urchins of nine and ten years old, who were placed before the magistrate charged with stealing a piece of cheese out of the open window of a cheesemonger. The theft was clearly proved, but a wretched-looking woman their mother, pale, sallow, and half-starved, stood wringing her hands beside her children, and declared that she had told them to do it.

“Well, then, woman, I shall commit you, too,” said the magistrate sharply. “What made you tell your children to thief?”

“Want,” replied the woman simply.

"Want!" exclaimed the magistrate. "No excuse at all! no excuse at all!"

"They must either thieve or starve," said the woman. "They had nothing to eat: how could I see them die?"

"Then, the best place for you all is the treadmill," said the magistrate; "there you will work and feed too. I shall commit you every one."

Hereupon the cheesemonger interposed, saying, that he would rather give the poor people another piece of cheese, than see them sent to the treadmill. But Aristides would not hear of such a thing, and the children and their mother were committed.

"I think he must have a billet," said the chevalier to himself; "though if we get him in the moon, we must take care not to put him on the bench."

A temporary interruption to the business of the court now took place, no one being brought before the magistrate for the space of about ten minutes, and his worship turned round to fill up the time by chatting with the chevalier and his companion.

"Have you heard the curious story," he said, "of the inquest at Outrun Castle?"

Harry Worrell pricked up his ears, and looked somewhat too conscious for a police court; but the chevalier with his imperturbable composure, merely replied that he had not seen the newspaper that morning; upon which the magistrate detailed to him the particulars, which the reader already knows, and, after laughing at the verdict, added, "The funniest particular of the whole business is, that one of the jury declared afterwards to several people that he heard the corpse chuckle. What he means I cannot tell, but I give you his own words, 'he heard the corpse chuckle.'"

The chevalier laid his finger by the side of his long nose. It was a nose that had been given to him by nature for that express purpose, and whenever he did so, it brought an indescribable look of cunning, or rather I should say, shrewdness into his countenance.

"What's the matter?" said the magistrate.

"What's the matter?" said Worrell.

"Nothing at all," answered the chevalier; "only I have my suspicions, your worship, which it may be necessary to communicate immediately in the right quarter. I will therefore take my leave, and allow me to say, that I shall be very happy to see you in my country."

The chevalier presented his small billet and took his leave. The magistrate bowed, holding the ticket between his fingers, and thinking it the chevalier's card. The moment, however, the chevalier was out of court, his worship looked at what he held in his hand, and rage and fury took possession of him. "Run after them, catch them, seize them," he cried. "I'll commit them for contempt, I'll imprison them, I'll send them to the treadmill,—I'll—I'll——" But it was in vain that he threatened; the chevalier and Worrell were in the hackney coach, the hackney coach had rolled away, the officers only thought that some hoax had been put upon the magistrate, and made no haste to catch the fugitives; and thus ended the visit to the police office.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CHEVALIER STATES HIS SUSPICIONS—JOEY PIKE MAKES A PROPOSITION—HE VOLUNTARILY PLACES HIMSELF IN STRAITENED CIRCUMSTANCES—THE COMPOSITION OF A YOUNG LADY—MADEMOISELLE BROCHET APPEARS UPON THE STAGE—SHE MEETS WITH SOME READY-MADE LOVE—VISITS THE VILLAGE OF OTRUN—ASTOUNDS MRS. MUGGINS AND BECOMES POPULAR.

THE chevalier was as still and as solemn as a discharged musket during the whole time he was in the coach, from the windows of which, just as it rolled up to the Golden Cross, they beheld Joey Pike tripping gracefully in. He was standing cap-in-hand at the foot of the stairs to receive them, and at a mysterious sign from the chevalier, he followed them up into the sitting-room, where, to the surprise of both, Mr. de Lunatico grasped the wrist of each of his companions, and in awful and subdued voice, repeated twice, while he looked from the one to the other, "He is alive!"

"*Qui vive?*" exclaimed Joey Pike.

"Whom do you mean?" asked Worrel.

"The Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse," replied the chevalier.

"Why, one thing is very certain," replied Worrel—"that if I shot him I did not intend it, for I fired, as I thought, a couple of yards to the right."

"He is alive!" repeated the chevalier; "and this is the way it has all happened, depend upon it. He fainted dead away with fright—cut his forehead on a stone, (I thought it did not look like a pistol wound,) and they wishing to get you out of the way, Worrel, on poor Laura's account, or to tease you out of malice, have concealed the facts of his being yet alive. I declare if I were not engaged to dine with the secretary of state, I would go down this very day——"

"*E troppo tardi!*" cried Joey Pike.

"Or to-morrow," continued the chevalier, "and secretly investigate the matter to the bottom. Cannot you go, Worrell?"

Harry shook his head. "I shall never see the place again without pain," he said, "and although it certainly will be a relief to my mind to think that the poor fellow is not shot, yet really I cannot undertake to go there yet."

Joey Pike fell upon one knee, stretched forth his left hand, laid his right upon his heart, and bent his head before the chevalier.

"Let me undertake it," he cried in a sepulchral tone, as if he were Ion going to devote himself to death for the sake of his country. "Let me undertake it. This very morning, nay, within this very hour, I have arranged a plan for returning with the *bienviellance* of your *eccellenza*, to watch the proceedings that are taking place in *toutes nos affaires*. Have I your *consentimento*?"

"I must hear, my good Joey," said the chevalier, "what is the plan you intend to pursue; for from what you told me a little while ago, I suppose there is a warrant out against you."

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TOP

Just like a long and winding road

"Sir," said Joey rising from his knee, "after I quitted you, but now, a certain *tendresse* led me to the *Chien Noir* in Fetter-lane, where in conversation with the sweet Elise de Tuppins, the only one in my confidence besides yourself, we formed a plan for my return to our native village in order to put the police of the place under my *surveillance*, she having my most positive assurance, that through your means I can prove my innocence."

"But how, but how?" said the chevalier. "How can you watch the police without the police catching you? It seems to me like the mice hunting the cat."

"Thus, sir," said Joey, taking his countenance between his middle finger and his thumb, and smoothing it gently down till the two digits met at the tip of his chin, "you see I am smooth and feminine of face, in voice sweet, and in movement graceful. Ma belle Elise has promised me a supply of her apparel, and letters to all her relations as her dearest friend in town, Mademoiselle Brochet, the Countess of Ramscatskin's lady's maid. For flowing curls, what have I to do but visit the Strand? for hips and haunches, I will go to Vigo-lane. My waist is naturally small, my hand delicate, my foot *gentil*. What would you more? I feel assured I can enact Mademoiselle Brochet to the life."

"No bad plan," said the chevalier, "indeed; but we must set about the business quickly, Joey. The coach, I think, leaves early in the morning. Go to your fair lady, get yourself well dressed, and return hither. We will take a room for you as Mademoiselle Brochet, and a place for you in the coach to-morrow under the same name."

"Pardon my indiscretion, excellenza," said Joey Pike; "but ere I can put this in execution I must have gold—gold that unlocks the hearts of all men must now furnish locks to my countenance—gold must now give me, too, a *tourneur*: without gold one cannot purchase ladies' shoes, and I fear the *pied mignon* of my fair Elise, is somewhat smaller than my own."

The chevalier, as the reader knows, was liberality itself, and forth came his purse in an instant, from which a liberal supply was poured into Joey's hand.

"A thousand *ringraziamentos*!" said Joey; and after receiving some farther directions from the chevalier, he issued forth to seek the fair Elise.

The landlady of the Black Dog was so far let into the secret as to know that a masquerade was intended, and as she had been long acquainted with Joey, and knew him to be an honest harmless personage, she followed the principle of the apostle in thinking no evil, and aided the barmaid right willingly to dress him up. To his own little room, which he had inhabited before the arrival of the chevalier in town, Joey carried up an immense mass of female apparel, together with the wig and the bustle he had bought. It was agreed that as soon as he had got on a decent petticoat he should give a signal and receive assistance, and accordingly at the first sign in rushed the landlady and Miss Tuppins.

They found him standing before the glass in a flannel petticoat which came but little below the knee, looking ineffable things at him-

self in the mirror ; and seizing upon him with remorseless hands they thrust him into a pair of stays, and began to lace him with a degree of vehemence and unction that had nearly cut him in two.

" *Pitié, pitié,*" cried Joey ; " I cannot breathe. Remember, *belle Elise*, that my *taille* is not so slender as yours !"

Elise gave him a box on the ear, and away they laced till Joey Pike felt very much as a roasted pig must do when its skin is first changed into crackling.

" Stay, stay !" he cried ; " let me see if I can move ;" and he attempted to put himself into the attitude of the *Venus de Medici*. It was not without an explosion, however, for one of the laces snapped suddenly behind, and at the same time there was a loud crack in front.

" My best busk !" cried Miss Tuppins. " You clumsy creature, you have broke it through the middle !"

" Clumsy !" cried Joey ; " Oh, *Dio !*"

The ladies, however, were convinced by this experiment that they could never make Joey Pike a straight-laced young lady, and they accordingly slackened the girths till he could move more at ease. Then came the letting out of petticoats and gowns, the putting on of sandalled shoes, the adjusting of the false hair, and the little no-crowned cap, while ever and anon between each of the various acts the wonder and admiration of the fair ladies grew to see what a pretty simpering girl could be constructed even out of such materials as Joey Pike afforded. He himself was in ecstasies and when at length he beheld himself in the glass, crowned with a smart second-hand French bonnet, he burst forth into a fit of antics that made his fair Elise half angry, and nearly killed the good-humoured landlady with laughing. He skipped, he danced, he pirouetted, he talked French, he was Taglioni at one moment, a *professor de langues* the next ; he took a chaste salute of the two ladies, he made them low and reverend court'seys, he did every thing in short that might be expected from Joey Pike under such circumstances, and seemed, to say the truth, to feel himself as much at home in his new apparel as his old. It was by this time growing dark, and away he went up the Strand, after taking a tender leave of his *namorata* who gratified him with an embrace in his female capacity, for which perhaps neither party was sorry to find an excuse. Away he went, I say, up the Strand, with a gingerly pace, and a boy behind him carrying a large handbox full of borrowed plumes, similar to those with which he was already decorated. Joey had no difficulty in mincing his steps, pointing his toes, and wriggling along with steps like demisemiquavers after the fashion of a little Parisian of the second class, and it must be said that his air was very doubtful and not particularly virtuous. Under these circumstances a gentleman passing along ventured to take Joey by the hand, and called him a devilish fine girl ; but our friend snatched his offended fist away, exclaiming with a strong foreign accent, " Don't, sair ! *impertinence !*"

Nor was this the only notice he attracted, but with an air of indignant modesty he kept all his extempore lovers at arm's length, and reaching the Golden Cross, Charing-cross, in safety, he asked if the



Isaacs Masquerade Warehouse

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Chevalier de Lunatico and Mr. Henry Worrel lodged there. An answer in the affirmative was immediately given, followed by an inquiry whether he were Mademoiselle Brochet, for whom a room had been engaged. Joey replied that he was "De same," and was immediately ushered into the presence of the chevalier and his friend, who could scarcely restrain their laughter even in the presence of the waiter.

To say truth, had they not been made aware beforehand of the transformation that was about to take place, neither of them would have recollected the smart youth of the Half Moon, so completely was he changed in appearance, manner, and voice. Not even to them, however, did Joey for a moment put off the character of Mademoiselle Brochet, but kept it up admirably till he took his leave and retired to rest, that he might be able to go by that "Shokang Diligence which go so early *le matin*."

In his own room Joey was somewhat puzzled. All his upper garments he knew he could manage well enough, but his stays he knew were neither so easily got rid of, nor so easily put on again. He therefore determined to go to bed in them, and a terrible night he had of it. Sleep, he certainly did; but Joey's imagination was not one to do without dreaming, and he very soon fancied himself in the village of Outrun, with the beadle of the parish taking him up as an abandoned woman. He was carried before a magistrate and ordered to be put in the stocks, but the beadle finding his foot was so small that he could not keep it in, bethought himself of a new contrivance and fastened him in by the middle. The operation was so unpleasant that Joey roared lustily, and in five minutes he was awakened by half-a-dozen people knocking at his door and asking what was the matter.

Joey's first exclamation to himself was "*Je révois !*" and following up the train which he knew was a good one, he shouted aloud in answer to the tender inquiries of those without—" *Je révois ! Je révois !*"

"Raved!" cried a bluff voice on the other side of the door. "Raved! Ay, I suppose you did; but if you want to rave, you should go to a mad-house."

"I was a dreaming!" cried Joey; "I was a dreaming very hard!"

"Ah, those d——n French people," said the same voice grumbling as it went away; "they're always *a dreaming*. They were a dreaming once they would have it all their own way; and after that they were a dreaming that they'd have Spain, and then they'd have Russia, and then that they'd lick England at Waterloo; but it all turned out a dream, and a d——n unpleasant one too, I should think."

Joey did not stay to attend very particularly to what was said, but conscious of the necessity of sleep, turned himself round upon his side, and was soon once more buried in the arms of Somnus. This time he had better success than before, for he went on without any troublous dreams till the dawn of morning. He was then roused, just having an hour to hurry on his things, and had luckily time enough to accomplish the long subject of his dressing, and to take some breakfast before he was summoned to the stage-coach. A tender and affectionate leave of him was taken by the chevalier and Harry Worrel, and having

the whole of the inside to himself, he had an opportunity of considering his whole plan beforehand. The thing that troubled him most of all, indeed, was his stays; and he saw that he should never be able to get them on without some female help, and he gallantly determined, like many another wandering hero, to cast himself upon the benevolence of a woman.

To pursue our tale, however, without pursuing his thoughts or his journey either, let us say, that after rolling on for many a live long hour, the coach stopped opposite the Half Moon in the village of Outrun, and punctual to the tick of the clock, there was the fair and blooming Mrs. Muggins at the door of her *auberge* with a neat barmaid and a respectable-looking hostler. Joey gazed upon them all, and putting himself into the place of one of the travellers accustomed to journey up and down that road, mentally exclaimed—if such a thing be possible—“There they are all—fair Muggins, sweet Sally, and Bill the hostler. But where is Joey Pike?”

“I go down here, sair,” said Joey to the coachman; and descending from the carriage he made a low court’sey to Mrs. Muggins, saying—“Good evening, mad—dame. Give me down my carton—. What I pay you, sair?”

The coachman named his fare, and the lady paid him liberally out of a well-appointed green silk purse, the sight of which greatly enhanced the respect of Mrs. Muggins.

“This way, ma’am,” she said, “this way. Show a light, Sally. Bill, carry up the lady’s band-box. No. 2, is nice and all ready. Pleasant day for travelling, ma’am.”

As soon as they entered the room she named, the landlady asked what her guest would take. The maid waited to see what would come of it, and the ostler halted at the door.

“Can it be possible,” said the assumed lady, addressing Mrs. Muggins, “that I may speak a word with you?”

“Certainly, ma’am,” replied the landlady, dropping a court’sey. “Bill, we don’t want you. Sally, go and put sheets to the fire.”

Her orders were instantly obeyed, upon which, and the door being closed, Mademoiselle Brochet tripped lightly up to the hostess of the Half-Moon, took her two hands in hers, and, bringing her mouth as close as the cap would let her to Mrs. Muggins’s ear, exclaimed, “I am Joey Pike.”

The hostess of the Half-Moon started back in the very act of uttering a long scream, so completely was she taken by surprise, astonished and astounded, overcome and confounded; but Joey, quick as thought divined her intention, clapped his hand upon her mouth and exclaimed, “If you speak I am lost!”

“Lost, you fool!” cried Mrs. Muggins; “why, you are lost already! Dont you know that there’s a coroner’s warrant out against you for the murder of old Scapulary? Don’t you know—.”

“I know it all,” replied Joey.

“Then what did you come here for?” demanded Mrs. Muggins.

“To watch the proceedings of all,” said Joey. “To see what every one is about, and, *a la fin*, to give myself up for trial as soon as I know that I shall not be kept in prison first.”

"Oh, that makes a great difference," said Mrs. Muggins. "If you intend to give yourself up for trial, that proves that you are innocent."

"And did you doubt my innocence, fair Muggins?" cried Joey; "*O cruel sorty!*"

"No, my poor boy," replied Mrs. Muggins: "to say the truth, I did not, but I did doubt that you would be able to prove it, for Jones the milkman saw you coming out of old Scapulary's just at the moment that he must have been murdered, for Mrs. Scapulary, poor thing, only went away for a minute to get him something, leaving the poor old soul quite well, and when she came back he was brutally murdered."

"Jones might see me," said Joey, "for I certainly ran against somebody as I came out; but the chevalier and Mr. Worrel both can prove that I was with them at the duel. I only ran when the old lord cried out to take us up for shooting Mr. Fitzurse. I popped into old Scapulary's because he was a relation and a friend, thinking to find refuge; but I found nothing, on the contrary, but a *cadavre*. The sight of him frightened me so, that I ran as hard as I could, and the turnpike man can prove at what hour I passed through the gate. It is only imprisonment I fear, Mrs. Muggins. Would you have me lose my bright days in a prison?"

"No, no, Joey," answered Mrs. Muggins. "But what does your master say to all this?"

"Why, it is he himself that has sent me down," replied Joey, "furnished me with the *denari*, and applauded my enterprise. So here I stay till the assizes, giving notice to whom it may concern, that I am present though non-apparent, and will appear to take my trial, *au jour et moment*."

"Well," said the hostess of the Half-Moon, "if that be the case, I'll do all I can to help you, Joey."

"You can do nought to help me, fair Muggins," replied Joey, "but keep my secret and lace my stays."

"Lace your stays! Ha, ha, ha," cried Mrs. Muggins, "that's a good un. I'll have nothing to do with your stays, Joey."

"Mrs. Muggins," said Joey in a solemn tone, "I am a decent young woman, and if you do not lace my stays I am lost."

"Well, then, you must come down to the bar," said Mrs. Muggins, and after nearly as many preliminaries as were found requisite by Sterne and the lady in the black silk breeches case, a convention was agreed upon to enable Joey Pike to have his stays laced, and yet save the reputation of Mrs. Muggins.

All this being settled to Joey's full satisfaction, he supped and went to bed, and the next day began his campaign as Mademoiselle Brochet, by delivering sundry billets from the fair *Élise de Tuppins* to her various acquaintances in the village of Outrun.

Joey's reception was flattering in the extreme, and a series of small tea-parties was commenced in his honour, where he kept up his assumed character with the highest spirit, flirted, danced, languished, and never forgot for a moment to speak the most detestable English that ever was heard.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. LONGSHANKS PREACHES WITHOUT ORDINATION—MR. LONGMORE OBJECTS TO ONE OF THE QUALITIES OF A GHOST—WIDOW BAIN STANDS UP IN DEFENCE OF ONE APPARITION, AND MEETS WITH A MORE SUBSTANTIAL ONE THAN SHE EXPECTED.

“WHAT may be the first state of the spirit after death,”—said Mr. Longshanks, addressing himself to Mr. Longmore, with the widow, Nelly Bain, standing on his right hand. “What may be the first state of the spirit after death is difficult for philosophy to divine, and revelation has given us no information. There is not the slightest cause, however, to doubt, that as far as the individual being itself is concerned, there is not the most minute pause between the conclusion of earthly sensation and spiritual sensation. The absence of recollection is death; and a state of being unmarked by any feeling is, in fact, no state of being at all, as far as the creature itself is concerned. The interval, therefore, between the extinction of the life of this world and its renewal in another, must but seem a single point to the spirit of man, even were he to remain for a thousand ages unawakened to his new existence. In that long sleep no chiming clocks could mark the time; no griefs, no sorrows calendar the years; no kindly affections write in white characters the record of our joys; no hopes, either fulfilled or disappointed, mark the boundaries between day and day. The perfect sleep of undisturbed youth, when we close our eyes at night and open them in the morning, wondering that day has so soon come back, is the only image that we can have of death and resurrection; even supposing, that in the interval the soul remains unconscious.”

Mr. Longmore sat with his eyes covered with his hands, and the tears bedewing them; for the sermon of the surgeon had been called forth by the mention of sorrows but too present to his own heart. The widow had listened with downcast eyes, though with much pleasure, to the words of her good friend: she liked the subject that was somewhat painful to Mr. Longmore; for all her hopes in this world were over, and her joys had been snatched away one by one; so that she was pleased to hear something of the land to which those she loved had gone, and whither she was soon to follow. Mr. Longmore, on the contrary, had received the blow without any previous preparation. Laura had not been to him *his all in life*; and he would rather that she had stayed with him here, than gone on to receive him “at that bourne from which no traveller returns.”

When the good surgeon paused, the widow raised her eyes for a moment, and then dropped a courtesy, saying, in a voice of some alarm—

“It seems a long time, sir! I hope we shall not forget all about this world in that time.”

“Oh, no,” answered the surgeon; “as I said but now, forgetfulness is death, and the faculties of the spirit suffer no decay; it is the facul-

ties of the body that go one by one. No one can tell how it may be that all the actions of our lives, all that we have done or endured, will be recalled to us in our more perfect state. But we have sufficient indications even in this life, that such things may and can be. Let any one fix his mind for a moment upon some point in the times long past, some scenes that he wishes to recall, some faces that have grown dim in the mist of years; his memory will fail him, it will all be obscure and dark; confused images that will not arrange themselves in form; vapours tinted with the sunshine, but rolling rapidly from shape to shape. Then let some word of those times be spoken, it matters not what; let some song be sung that we have heard from lips long gone; let some picture bring back the dwelling-place of our youth; let some flower send us back the odour we have loved in other days, and in a moment a thousand things that we have forgotten for years, will rise up distinct and tangible before our eyes; each vague image will take its sensible form again, and memory, which but slumbered, will awake to tell us all we wished, in tones definite and clear. Thus too, when we hear of the death of some distant friend—some one of whom our thoughts, perhaps, have proved treacherous, guarding but carelessly the treasure of his memory: we hear of his death, and then, oh! with what painful reality all that we had forgot comes back—the smiles, the happy looks, the kindly acts, the gay companionships, the words, the very tones, that seemed blotted out from our recollection for ever. No, no, Widow Bain, it wants but the stroke upon the bell to call the whole household of the spirit together, and in another world that stroke will be given by an omnipotent hand, to which, in all times of sorrow we must bow both with resignation and with confidence.”

The widow raised her eyes towards heaven, and thought of her son; and good Mr. Longshanks went on, knowing well that it is with difficulty that we realize to ourselves the idea of time being a nonentity.

“I do not mean to say,” he continued, “by any means, that the spirit will, as it were, remain in abeyance till the last day: on the contrary, there are many reasons to be gathered, both from philosophy and revelation, for an opposite conclusion. We are told of two instances of translation from this world to another—we are told of spirits having risen—I speak always of revealed history—and there are many indications of actual and conscious existence in the spirits of the dead, in various parts of our Saviour’s teaching. Besides that remarkable text in which, referring to Abraham, he showed that his Father is not God of the dead, but God of the living. Philosophy too tells us, that such is likely to be the case; though I do not mean to say, that such a thing as the appearance of spirits, except for especial purposes, and in interruption of the ordinary laws of nature——”

“It is impossible,” said Mr. Longmore, looking up, “according to the science of catoptrics, that an unsubstantial body can reflect the rays of light in such a manner as to become represented upon the retina.”

“What is light itself?” demanded Mr. Longshanks, turning upon him sharply. “Who said that ghosts were unsubstantial? who shall limit the tenuity of matter? Of all these things, sir, we know”

nothing. Religion tells us as much as it is necessary to know: religion tells us that spirits have appeared, and that's enough for you or me either."

The good surgeon was beginning to wax warm; and, in all probability, ere many minutes had passed, he would have rapped out a heavy oath or two, but just at that moment the widow dropped one of her calm quiet courtesys, saying—

"My poor William's spirit appeared four nights ago, sir!"

"The devil, he did!" exclaimed Mr. Longshanks, who, as the reader may have perceived, was not always particularly reverent in his piety. "Nonsense, woman! what do you mean?"

"Why, sir," she replied, "it's very true, I can assure you. Old Mrs. Maroon who was left to watch when they brought me here, came up to me yesterday, and told me how, the very first night she fell asleep for a minute or two, and waking up all aghast, she was just in time to see a tall figure, in white, walk out of the cottage, or rather disappear, for it made no noise at all; so it must have been the poor dear boy; and that's the reason I wish to get back again as soon as your honour thinks it proper."

"Would you not be afraid?" asked Mr. Longmore, with an inquiring look.

"What! afraid to see William!" cried the woman, with a look of yearning sorrow. "Oh, sir! sleeping or waking, living or dead, I would give my right hand to see my poor boy again."

"Oh, mother's love! mother's love!" cried Mr. Longshanks. "Saw a tall white figure go out of the cottage!" and after pondering over the matter for several minutes, he added—"the d——d old woman has been asleep and dreaming."

"She owns that she was asleep, sir," said the widow; "but she says that she had woke up quite, and saw the figure as clearly as if it had been full day. I should very much like to get back to the cottage, sir."

"Well, well," replied Mr. Longshanks, "you can get back this very night if you please—now the funeral is over. Tell the gardener to go up and help you. I will come up myself in the evening and see how you are going on."

Widow Bain dropped a courtesy and retired, leaving Mr. Longshanks and his companion to finish their philosophical dispute at their leisure. She herself, however, proceeded without loss of time to get the little packet ready, which contained all the goods and chattels that had been brought down for her use to Mr. Longmore's. The gardener willingly wheeled them up for her in his barrow, and the poor widow entered the scene of her early joy and her early love with feelings which the reader must conceive, for we will not dilate upon them; suffice it, that although she was possessed with the spirit of calm endurance to as great an extent as perhaps any woman on the earth, she was quite overcome, as she gazed round the cottage and saw a thousand things which recalled to her memory some little trait of the early dead. The poor widow hid her face and wept. Just at that moment the old woman, Maroon, came in, and seeing the state of poor Widow Bain she volunteered to stay

with her to keep her cheerful, as she called it. In the moment of depression Mrs. Bain accepted the proposal, and the gardener, after having sat a while with them, left the two women together, and returned home as night was approaching. To say the truth, Mrs. Maroon was not the most eligible person that the widow could have chosen for her companion. She was one of the solemn and awful people who think they show their sympathy best with any one in sorrow by talking of every thing that is melancholy, and taking the most gloomy picture of human nature. Thus she went on fidgetting about the cottage to make Widow Bain as comfortable as possible, talking of every misery that ever happened to any one on earth, and like the prophets of old fore-showing sorrows to come. The widow bore it all with exemplary fortitude; wept a little from time to time, but still withdrawing her thoughts from this world, strove to look forward to a reunion with those she loved in a brighter and a better state.

About a couple of hours after dark, however, Mrs. Maroon, who was just passing the window, suddenly exclaimed, "Laus' a marcy! There was a man looking in."

"See what he wants," said Mrs. Bain, who was busy boiling some water for tea.

"Not I," answered Mrs. Maroon; "I am afeard."

Widow Bain, however, had now no fears left, and going to the door, she opened it suddenly when, to her surprise she beheld a man with his hands stretching up as if thrust under the thatch of the cottage. The moment he saw her he took to his heels and ran, and the widow shut the door again, saying, "I wonder what's the meaning of that?"

"Who, was it, who was it?" cried Mrs. Maroon.

"I did not see his face," replied the widow, but he was a stout, thick-set man, like Smalldram the tinman."

"I thought it was his face," said Mrs. Maroon, and almost as she spoke, some one knocked with a stick at the door, the latch was raised, and Mr. Longshanks entered.

"Pray, sir," asked Mrs. Maroon, before she gave him time to speak, "did you meet any body as you came up?"

"Nobody but that poacher scoundrel, Smalldram," said the surgeon. "Has he been here, woman?"

"He's been looking in at the window," replied Mrs. Maroon.

"And when I looked out he had his hand up to the thatch," said Widow Bain, "as if he was going to pull a handful of the straw out."

"He's after no good, he's after no good," said Mr. Longshanks. "Please God we shall all live to see him hanged!" and with the expression of this charitable expectation the conversation dropped upon that point.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE MORAL CONDITION OF MRS. SCAPULARY—SHE CONFERS WITH A FRIEND WHO HELPED HER AT A PINCH—HE SAYS SWEET THINGS TO THE WIDOW—SHE EXPRESSES HER APPREHENSIONS AND FINALLY DRAWS A SECRET FROM HIM—MADMOISELLE BROCHET TREADS UPON THE HEELS OF THE SECRET—SHE ALARMS AND PUZZLES MRS. SCAPULARY—THE WIDOW PREPARES THE WAY FOR PUTTING HER FRIEND IN A STATE OF SUSPENSE—SHE MAKES A MISTAKE IN REGARD TO TIME AND PLACE.

THE body of poor Tobias Scapulary was laid in the familiar earth of the churchyard which he had so often tossed and tumbled about, and which now received him like an old acquaintance. The widow, dressed in becoming weeds, had spent the day in dignified seclusion, reckoning up upon a slate the various goods and chattels of which she had come into possession by the decease of the said Tobias some four-and-twenty hours before that event would naturally have occurred. The day declined, and night sat down upon the village of Ostrum, covering it all over with her black calimanco petticoat, and shutting out the eyes even of the stars from the ways of mortal man.

Although she had abundance of topics of consolation Mrs. Scapulary was somewhat queasy about the stomach. Imagination, that skittish jade, would play her tricks, even with Mrs. Scapulary, whom nature certainly never intended for an imaginative person. She could not get out of her sight the form of old Tobias, as he lay kicking, with his mouth open, under the tender hands of herself and Mr. Small-dram, and although she shut her eyes more than once to get rid of the unpleasant image, it was there under the eyelids just as much as before. Under these circumstances she had recourse to employment, the very best source of relief under all circumstances of mental disquietude. She put the kettle on the fire, she wiped and rubbed the table, she got a green glass bottle from the cupboard, she added a tumbler and wine-glass, she sought for a tea-spoon, and brought out the sugar-basin, and then she sat down and meditated fondly while the kettle began first to hiss, and then to whistle, and then to sing, as it is called. Still Mrs. Scapulary was uneasy in her mind, and as she would not think of her dear departed Toby, she turned her mind to Mr. Small-dram; but there the contemplation was not pleasant either, as the reader will perceive when he hears, that the conclusion which she came to was "He's a great villain, that Small-dram, that's clear enough. What right had he to go a cleaning out of old Toby's breeches pockets? There was a lot of money there, I know, and how can I tell how much? Hang me if I marry him. With what I've got now it'll be easy enough to get many a respectable young man; that it will and not such a seedy old scamp as that! Hang me if I knew how, if I wouldn't put him in for the murder, instead of letting it rest upon a nice young man like Joey Pike. I wonder what he's done with the money now? He's just the

one to go and flash it before half a dozen people and get the whole matter blown."

Just as she was in this part of her meditations, and had mechanically compounded a glass of warm and consolatory fluid, the door opened quietly and in walked Mr. Small dram himself.

"Lord! how you made me start," cried the widow. "Why didn't you knock?"

"Lord bless'ee, my dear creetur," said Mr. Small dram; "I come in quite nateral like. You and I is upon them terms, as vaves all ceremony."

Mrs. Scapulary would willingly enough have given her co-labourer a rebuff, but a certain sensation of being in his power overcame the proud conviction that he was in hers, and being a shrewd woman in her way, she saw that it would be necessary for her to arm and guard herself well in the first instance before she broke with Mr. Small dram; and therefore she resolved to be exceedingly civil to him till such time as she had related such suspicious circumstances to one or two indifferent persons as might tell against Mr. Small dram at a future period, if she found it necessary to charge him, and which might also tell in her favour if he were to reply with a *tu quoque*, and charge her in return.

"Yes," she said to herself—"yes, I must prepare the way; and if I can but get him to tell me what he has done with the money, I shall have a fast hold of him. I'll pretend I want him very much to marry me."

The reader will see that Mrs. Scapulary was a shrewd woman, a very shrewd woman, indeed. Mr. Small dram, though, according to his own expression, he knew a thing or two, was a sucking dove compared to her; and in pursuance of her plan, she now gave him an amiable nod, saying—

"Well, well, sit down and take a glass of gin and water. It won't do you any harm, Tom, this dark night."

"No; that it won't, my love," said Tom. "From all I hear, you've made a good thing of it, my dear."

"Tolerably well," replied Mrs. Scapulary. "Three thousand pounds in the funs, Tom; two houses up the village, one of 'em furnished; and this here house, or cottage, for one can't call this nasty place a house. I wonder the old brute could live here, when he had such a nice pleasant place close at hand. Only he let that, you know. He was always so fond of money."

"Ay, blasted fond," said Mr. Small dram. "Give us the sugar—there's a sweet creetur—or put your finger in and stir it; that will do as well."

"For shame, you flattering thing," said Mrs. Small dram. "I know what you want: you want me to name an early day; but we must be decent, you know, my dear; and besides, people might begin to talk and grow suspicious, if we married too soon."

"Pooh! nonsense!" answered Mr. Small dram. "Why, all the world knows it was Joey Pike who did the trick: we'll get him hanged for it, and then that account will be closed."

"But I am always so afraid of that money, and them papers that you took out of his pocket," said Mrs. Scapulary. "You are such a careless fellow, Tom, I'll bet you that you have left them now at your lodging."

"Not I," answered Mr. Small dram.

"Well, then," said the widow, "if you have got them with you, do give all the notes to me, and I'll give you gold and silver for them."

"No bad thought, that," replied Mr. Small dram; "but the truth is, I haven't got them with me."

"Then you've spent them all," said Mrs. Scapulary, vehemently. "You've spent them all in such a short time, and the whole thing will be blown."

"Nonsense! I haven't spent one of them. I have changed some of the gold, but not one of the fimsies, and I hid them and the rest away in a safe place, where no one can find them out."

"Come, I shan't be satisfied till you tell me where that is," said Mrs. Scapulary. "I ain't going to be hanged, Tom, for none of your nonsense; so I shan't be satisfied unless you tell me where they are."

"Pooh! You don't suppose I'd peach," replied her companion. "I'd die game, any how, my dear. If I must dance a jig upon nothing, I'll dance it alone."

"Ay, but Tom," said Mrs. Scapulary, putting on one of her sweetest and most insinuating looks, "I don't want you to do that neither—that wouldn't answer my turn no how."

"Nor mine, neither, my dear," said Mr. Small dram.

"Well, I shall never know a moment's happiness," rejoined the fair lady, in a touching tone, "till I know where them notes and papers are, or till you bring them to me and let me change them."

"Well, my dear, I'll bring them to-morrow," said Mr. Small dram; "but to make your mind easy for the present, I'll tell you that they are under the thatch of Nelly Bain's cottage. I put them in there the night after——"

But the worthy gentleman was stopped, ere he could conclude his speech, by a slight tap at the door, and then the latch being thrown up. Mrs. Scapulary looked somewhat surprised and scared; but the next instant there entered, on the tips of her toes, a tall, pretty-looking, well-dressed girl, with immense large *boucles* at the side of her face, a smart rose-coloured bonnet, and delicate French gloves. Advancing a step into the room, she dropped a low courtesy, then took two steps forward and dropped another; and then, with the most insinuating smile possible, addressed Mrs. Scapulary—

"A thousand pardons, madame," she said; "but I bring you this leetle billet from your acquaintance, Mademoiselle de Tuppins. *Ne derangez pas, sair*. Pray, don't let me disturb you."

But Mr. Small dram rose and scratched his head, and then, nodding to Mrs. Scapulary, said—"I'll come back another time: to-morrow night, perhaps."

Having uttered which words, he took his departure, closing the door carefully behind him. The moment he was gone, Mademoiselle Brochet,

for we need not tell the reader that such was the person now upon the scene, proceeded, with all the callous facility of a true Frenchwoman, to condole with Mrs. Scapulary upon her loss of the dear departed sexton.

"I been very much shock, madame, very much shock, indeed, to hear that your hose-band have been murdered. How you do it since?"

"How I do it!" almost shrieked Mrs. Scapulary. "Lord! miss, who said I did it?"

"No, no; you mistake," said Mademoiselle Brochet; "I say, how you do since it?"

"Oh, very well," cried Mrs. Scapulary, greatly relieved; "I never was better in my life."

"I always tought so," said Mademoiselle Brochet.

"Thought what?" demanded Mrs. Scapulary, beginning to be nettled.

"Vy, dat it must be extremely *charmant*, and make one woman very well, indeed, to get rid of one nasty old hose-band, and be a nice, pretty, young widow," was the reply.

The latter part of the speech sweetened the dose, and so Mrs. Scapulary swallowed it, answering with her eyes turned up—

"Ah! poor old man! it was a great charity—that is to say, it was a great relief to himself to die."

"Ah! very great charity and relief too," said Mademoiselle Brochet, marking the good lady's words more than she thought; "relief to him—charity to you. Now, do tell me how it was all *arrangé*."

"Arrangey!" cried Mrs. Scapulary, her doubts and apprehensions beginning to rise again.

But Mademoiselle Brochet replied—

"Dat is to say, how did it all happen?"

"Oh!" said Mrs. Scapulary, not at all unwilling to explain, and to make a person totally unconnected with the place the means of conveying to the public the first hints which she thought fit to give, of any doubt in regard to Mr. Smalldram. "Oh, I'll tell you how it all happened. Pray, sit down, miss, and take a drop of something comfortable.—It is all I have got to offer you."

"Oh, dear, no!" cried Mademoiselle Brochet, with a simpering look of reluctance, "I nevare take any speerits; at all events, not more dan half-a-glass: but I want vary much to hear how dis ting bin done."

The sexton's widow did not require much pressing, but went on to reply—

"As to the matter of that, I can't exactly tell how it was done, but I can tell you at what time it was done. You see the way of it was this—the old man had been very bad all night, and about five o'clock in the morning the poor old creature began to call out for some milk and water; so I thought I could not do less than go and fetch him some; and away I went, though I knew that it would be of little or no use; so I put on my things and went away to one or two places without getting a drop—though just at the corner of the house there

I met with Mr. Smalldrain, and asked him where he thought I could get some."

"Meestaire Smalldrain rise early in de moorning," said Miss Brochet.

"Ay, that he does," answered the sexton's widow; "one must get up early to come over him. However, I met him, as I have said, and I did think it odd that he should be out hanging about at that hour, and asked him the question, and then went and tried at several places, and when I came back about half-an-hour after, I found the poor old man with his eyes all staring, and his tongue half bit through! and I screamed out murder, as loud as I could, but he was quite dead! and it was a long time before I could get any of the neighbours to help me."

"Oh! dat vas so early," said Mademoiselle Brochet: "if you got back, mad-dame, in half-an-hour, dat could only be half past five—nobody up so early. But, perhaps, you not quite so early as dat—one often tell lie by mistake."

"Oh, dear no," cried Mrs. Scapulary, who chose to be very accurate, "I wasn't five minutes past the half hour; for I heard the clock strike when I was over against the other corner of the church there, and I had nothing to do but to walk home and open the door."

"Oh, vary well," said Mademoiselle Brochet, "if dat vas de case it is all right."

"Why, I've sworn to it before the magistrates," said Mrs. Scapulary.

"I am very glad to hear it, mad-dame," replied the young lady, rising and making a low courtesy; "I hope it may do you a *trés grand quantité* of good, mad-dame. I wish you a sweet evening—vary moch oblige by your pleasant information"—and away sailed Mademoiselle Brochet out of the cottage, leaving Mrs. Scapulary in a flutter which she could not well account for.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LAURA LONGMORE IN BED—WHAT MAY BE SUGGESTED BY A DREAM—THE PLEASURES OF MOONCALFING—AN ESSAY UPON LAUGHS—LAURA HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PEER, AND SEIZES AN OPPORTUNITY OF PROVING TO HER FATHER THAT SHE WAS LESS COMBUSTIBLE THAN HE THOUGHT HER—SHE RESUMES THE GHOST—INTERRUPTS A TETE-A-TETE, AND GIVES A PIECE OF WHOLESOME ADVICE.

LAURA LONGMORE slept soundly and sweetly—rosy dreams fluttered around her pillow, and made the slumber that of soft repose, but not of annihilation. She was no longer a prisoner: she had the means of escape in her own hands, and the load that hung upon her mind during the whole of the preceding day was now happily removed, leaving her bosom to heave lightly and her heart to beat free. Her last thoughts, as we have shown, had been fixed upon the words of the falling butler, and she had eagerly asked herself what those words could mean. Now,

curiosity, as all the world knows, is a woman's virtue. We call it a virtue deliberately, and may, perhaps, prove it to be so under certain limitations, before we have done with this extraordinary and most comprehensive book, and Laura was not without her share thereof; but besides this virtue she had in her disposition a good deal of another excellent quality, called fun; and as our natural disposition, or tastes, habits, sentiments, and propensities, undoubtedly go on affecting us during our sleeping as well as during our waking moments, Laura went on dreaming of what the butler had said, and turning it to all the wild purposes of imagination. She thought that she was playing ghost again, but now deliberately and with malice aforethought; and in her dream she walked hither and she walked thither through Outrun Castle, making very extraordinary discoveries, she knew not well of what, and seeing extraordinary sights, she knew not well where.

Thus went on madam Fancy all night, sitting astride of Laura's nose—we wonder she did not tumble off; for though it was as pretty a little nose as any in Europe, it was scarce large enough to be the hobby-horse even of a grasshopper—and filling her brain with all sorts of curious images. In the midst of all this our sweet little heroine awoke, and lay for some time afterwards reflecting upon all that had gone on in her own mind. It might be a curious question, how many great schemes besides the manufacture of patent shot, have been suggested to mankind by dreams. Not a few, reader, not a few—battles, sieges, stratagems, plots, arts, devices: for though fancy be a frolicsome jade, and, where you give her her head, will run away with you, yet still, when the rein lies easy in sleep, and you let her gallop at her will, she will often take you over a fence with an easy leap which would have cost you a mile to go round, had you been riding any other horse, or prevented her from having her own way. It was a dream first suggested to the mind of Laura Longmore the idea of remaining voluntarily in Outrun Castle, and enacting the ghost for her own satisfaction; and as she lay and pondered upon the matter, the bit of fun thus started seemed more and more enticing every minute. What a strange thing human nature is! that having a key under one's pillow should change the whole aspect of a particular situation, and make that which was distressing, painful, tedious, annoying—in short, a great bore—seem an excellent joke and a very pleasant amusement. All the day before, Laura had been in a state of the greatest depression—sad, sorrowful, anxious; but now that she had discovered that little key, she was as gay as a lark, and the only thing that troubled her was the thought that her father and Harry Worrel should go on grieving for her as dead. Not that she did not feel a great inclination to take up the ghost with Worrel also for a little, a very little while, just in order that she might have the pleasure of seeing herself mourned, and of removing the cause of mourning. But still her first business was in Outrun Castle; and how to remain the ghost there, and yet to let her father know that she was in a substantial state of existence, was a matter that puzzled her.

It is a pleasant thing to lie in bed of a fine spring morning and see the lines of sunlight move along the floor, and hear the gay birds sing their matin song, with all the sweet accessories of country life, and a

young season and a young heart. Always have the window open, dear reader, for there is something in the soft breath of spring, as he comes with one wing perfume and the other music, which, while it plays round your cheek as you lie and meditate, makes you feel as if sweet kindred spirits had come from afar upon the broad pathway of the sunshine to watch your repose and gratulate your waking. It is a very pleasant thing, indeed, thus to lie and enjoy the *otium* which the old poet spoke of, falsely by some translated idleness; for there is no time in all mortal existence in which mind is more active than when that *otium* possesses the body—active in fine and high things, though not, perhaps, in the dull and sordid cares of life, in the beastly struggles, and the foul contentions of the working-day world, for, thank God, man, or woman either, may be very active, though he be not engaged in mending, marring, grooming a horse, carpentering, joining, or cabinet-making, which six occupations comprise amongst themselves in their different acceptations, ramifications, and subdivisions, all the possible employments of a human being, except moon-calfing—as I will be bound to demonstrate to you, my lord archbishop, any time you will set apart a day for the whole discussion of the subject.

It is very pleasant, indeed, but the worst of it is—and the worst of every other pleasant thing upon the earth—that it must have an end. Thus Laura enjoyed herself very much for about an hour after she awoke, but then foolishly getting ashamed of lying any longer, she rose, and was beginning to dress herself, when the light tap of one of the maids was heard at her door. They made their appearance once more two together, but in the present instance this proceeding was adopted, not in respect to any ghosts, but rather out of reverence for their lord's commands, who had a great idea of putting one woman as a check upon another. Having brought their fair charge all that was necessary for her toilet, the maidens were about to retire, but Laura renewed her application to Lord Outrun in a somewhat peremptory tone; and Jane, who was one of the two on the present occasion, replied, in her pretty timid way, that she would tell his lordship as soon as he came down, but that he never made his appearance before noon.

Laura's breakfast was brought at the usual hour, was eaten with a much better appetite than the day before, and being finished was cleared away. The window looking out into the park, became again her resource; and she was enjoying the sight of a troop of deer galloping in single file across the park and leaping over a little rivulet that obstructed their course, when a step heavy, but not slow, upon the staircase, announced the coming of Lord Outrun. At the same time, however, Laura heard a long, peculiar chuckling laugh, such as might do honour to a prime minister. It may be asked, what's in a laugh any more than a name; but let me tell the reader, there is more character displayed in the mode and the manner of a laugh, than in all the speeches that ever were spoken, or all the looks that ever were looked. I never yet knew a great man or a candid man, (and I have known many of both,) from the Duke of Wellington to Dugald Stewart, who had not a hearty outspoken cheerful laugh. But there is

a sort of low chuckling, mocking, *insouciant* cachinnation, which, whenever you hear it, be it from whom it may, you may be perfectly sure that that man is utterly impervious to every thing like a sense of moral right and wrong. It is not that he is hard, or harsh, or firm, or stern, or strong principled. No; it is that he is utterly careless about every thing, that he is of the *blazé* school of philosophy; for I know nothing else to call it, whose foundation is the extinction of all feeling, and whose motto is indifference. They are all of them, almost to a man; what are called devilish good-humoured fellows, and most of them have a certain quantity of wit, for their blood is but soap and water, and it requires no great skill to blow bubbles with it.

That low, chuckling, supercilious laugh was not exactly Lord Outrun's characteristic, for a somewhat better spirit would occasionally cause him to laugh loud and jollily; but as soon as Laura heard it upon this occasion she naturally said to herself—

“There is no chance of making any impression upon this man; so I must take my own way with him.”

The moment after, the key turned in the lock, and the noble viscount entered. His rosy face, which, if any thing, was of a shade deeper than ordinary, was all smiles and blandishment; and advancing to Laura, he took her hand, saying—“How are you, my sweet young lady? More beautiful than ever, I declare! Why, you are perfectly resplendent.” And he went on to apologise for not being able to visit her during the preceding day, as all the sad business he had to go through, coroner's inquests, &c.—and he had very nearly laughed again in spite of the rueful air he struggled to assume—had occupied him entirely.

“I am very happy, my lord, that you are come at length,” said Laura in a determined tone, though she knew it would be of no use to try for her liberation, and did not particularly wish it. “I desire to know upon what pretence, upon what motive, you have had me carried away, and continue to keep me here?”

“Upon the purest parental affection, my sweet friend,” replied Lord Outrun.

“A very curious token of affection, certainly,” said Laura.

“But none the less sincere,” replied the peer. “The fact is, that since that unfortunate affair of my poor dear deceased Freddy, I cannot bear the thought of your giving your hand to any one else, except some one who is worthy to succeed him in your affections. I know you were devotedly attached to him.”

“Your lordship is mistaken,” replied Laura, who saw that the peer, was so little affected by his son's death, that she need not be very delicate in regard to his memory. “Your lordship is mistaken; I disliked him amazingly.”

“Ah! love has its whims,” said the peer; “love has its whims. You were attached to him—only you did not know it: and, as I was saying, I cannot bear the idea of one for whom I have so high a regard and esteem as yourself, giving her hand to any body unworthy to succeed the object of her first choice.”

He had well nigh made Laura angry; and, perhaps, if she had not had

the key in her pocket she might have threatened to throw herself out of the window, and do all manner of violent things. As it was, however, she resolved to take the affair quietly, perhaps we may say a little saucily; but, if anger for ill treatment never vents itself in a more disagreeable manner, no great harm will be done. Laura got up and made the peer a low and stately courtesy, saying—

“I am deeply indebted to your lordship, and so will doubtless be my father, when he comes to know that out of pure parental solicitude for me, you have inflicted upon him the bitter sorrow of supposing his only child burnt to death, and have inflicted upon me the punishment of solitary confinement. For my part, I estimate your lordship’s favours justly and to the full: my father will do so also as soon as he knows them, and will endeavour to repay them in the most approved manner.”

Lord Outrun did look a little foolish; but as Laura spoke, a plan came across her mind, and she added, before the peer could reply—

“May I ask if I am to be kept totally without amusement, as well as without society?”

“Oh! I don’t want to keep you without society, my dear,” replied the peer. “You shall have the whole range of the house and be my little housekeeper, if you will promise not to run away. I will introduce you to my nephew, who is very like poor Freddy.”

“I will run away the moment I can,” said Laura: “depend upon it, I will not stay a moment longer than I can help.”

“Well, then, my little dear-spirited thing,” cried the viscount, “all I can do is to give you amusement. Now, what sort of amusement do you want?”

“Books,” said Laura, “music, drawing, a gallop across the park upon a nice horse, would not be amiss; and if that’s not to be had, a walk in the garden.”

“Very pretty, by jingo!” cried the peer; “but as neither galloping nor walking will suit your health at present, I will send you up some books and some things for drawing. I dare say, we can find a pencil or two in the house.”

“A crow pen and some Indian ink will do,” said Laura, “if you cannot. But remember, my lord, I insist upon being suffered to depart. I warn you that you keep me here at your peril, and that I will certainly seek redress as soon as I am at liberty.”

The peer chuckled gaily, and seemed to think it vastly great fun to see fair Laura Longmore in a passion, as he termed it.

“I will introduce my nephew to you as soon as he comes down,” said the peer. “He used to be a very nice handsome young man, and he’ll find means to console you I don’t doubt.”

Laura did not deign to make any reply, but turned towards the window, and the peer seized the opportunity to depart, saying that he would send every thing to make her comfortable.

In about half an hour the two maids returned with a large basket between them full of books, paper, pencils, and writing materials; for Lord Outrun, confident of his own people and their perfect obedience, had not the slightest apprehension of Laura making her escape, or holding any communication with her friends. Her first

proceeding, however, was to write a brief letter to her father, in order to quiet his mind, and the next question was how to get it conveyed. She thus sat a long time pondering over the matter, thinking which of the two girls she should try to bribe, or whether the old housekeeper, who visited her from time to time, might not have a heel as well as Achilles. At the end of about half an hour, however, she heard some one whistling, and putting her head out of the window, she perceived coming round the corner of the house a countryman in a smock-frock. Her determination was taken in a moment, and she called to the man to stop a minute, which he instantly did and looked up; upon which Laura giving him a nod with the most easy and unconcerned look that she could command, went to a table, took up the note and threw it out, saying, "If you will take that note, or send any one with it to Mr. Longmore of Ivy Hall, you will get half-a-crown for your pains."

"Do it with pleasure, miss," said the man, taking up the note, and Laura dismissing him with a nod, saw him walk across the park unquestioned.

This being accomplished to her heart's content, she amused herself in two ways: first in reading, and then constructing from some old pocket handkerchiefs which she found in the trunk, a shade for the lamp which was left with her at night, in such a manner as to give it all the effect of a dark-lantern.

To do Lord Outrun nothing more than justice it must be said he fed every part of his household in the best possible manner, and Laura was certainly taken especial care of. Every delicacy of the season was sent up for her dinner about half-past six o'clock, then came tea and coffee, and at half-past ten the maids did not scruple to inquire what she would like for supper. Dismissing them as soon as possible, however, of which they were right glad, for the very atmosphere of the place felt ghastly to them, Laura affected a desire to go to bed, but in reality to prepare herself for her expedition with more care than she had done upon the preceding night. The grey satin gown and the black mantilla, were of course chosen as her garments on account of the great effect they had produced and the disguise which the hood of the mantilla afforded, but Laura made some additions to her toilet, having discovered in the drawing-box which had been sent to her the means of rendering herself much more ghost-like. To say the truth, had Jerry Tripe but taken time to look he would have seen that the spirit of his dear departed young lady was as delicately rosy as one of Albano's angels; but on the present occasion Laura did not scruple to besmear the fine red and white of her skin with a mixture of white chalk and Prussian blue, which gave her such a cadaverous appearance as to make her start when she looked in the glass. Even after the clock had struck twelve she waited till some remote sounds of merriment which she heard died away, and then cautiously opening the door with her muffled lamp in her hand, she issued forth and took the same course which she had followed on the preceding night. This time, however, she descended the stairs in peace, and opening the door by which Jerry Tripe had entered, she saw a long passage up which came the sounds of voices, and that fact deterred her from proceeding any farther in that

direction. On the other hand was another door to which she concluded the respectable Jerry Tripe had been directing his course, when she encountered him, and opening it she perceived before her a short passage, and another staircase with a fine mahogany balustrade. Not doubting that this must lead to some of the better parts of the house, she ascended with a noiseless step, and then followed a corridor which she found at the top. At the end of it were three doors—one before her, one on the right hand, and one on the left. There was a low murmuring of voices too, as of persons speaking in little more than a whisper, and not exactly distinguishing where the sounds came from, she opened the right-hand door, with some palpitation of the heart it must be acknowledged, but with a firm and noiseless hand. The moment she did so, she saw before her a gallery with tall windows on one side and portraits on the other. Her entrance was so noiseless that though the gallery was not vacant she disturbed nobody, and by the single light which it contained she beheld the pretty little housemaid, Jane, with a candle in her left hand, standing talking to a gentleman who held her right tenderly in his, and in whom, to her surprise and consternation, Laura recognised no less a person than the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse!

Poor Jane was in the midst of a vehement reply, to something that the honourable gentleman had said to her—"No;" she said with great emphasis on each word; "No, I will not.—I see you do not intend to keep your word with me."

"Stuff and nonsense, Jane!" cried the hopeful heir of Outrun Castle. "I will keep all my promises. Don't be a silly girl."

"Did you not promise to marry me?" asked Jane; "and are you not going to marry this young lady, this Miss Longmore, that they have got here instead?"

"Pooh, nonsense! I'll not marry her," cried Mr. Fitzurse. "Come, come, Jane, don't be silly. I will marry none but you, depend upon it."

Mr. Fitzurse was going on, but Laura, having had time to recover from her surprise, and to remember that Mr. Fitzurse was not the most courageous of mortals, and also fearing that she might hear something more of their secrets than might be in any degree pleasant and delectable to her ears, resolved to make a bold stroke for her ghostly reputation, and advancing with a slow, silent, gliding step, towards the head of the great staircase, which she saw at the other end of the gallery, she came close before the eyes of Mr. Fitzurse with the light of Jane's candle streaming full upon her quaint old habiliments and whitened countenance. Jane's honourable lover instantly staggered back with a loud "D——n it!" and Jane suddenly turning round with readily excited terror saw the sight likewise, and with a vigorous scream let the candle fall after the most approved fashion.

"Marry her!" said Laura in a deep solemn voice, but without stopping her progress for a single moment; "Marry her, or the fate of your race will fall upon you!" and on she went, quickening her steps, till reaching the top of the great staircase she turned round into the right-hand corridor, which she concluded would lead her back to her chamber.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PEER EXPRESSES HIS OPINION UPON SPIRITS—HE AT LENGTH HAS RECOURSE TO ONE HIMSELF—MR. FITZURSE OBJECTS TO BEING BURIED ALIVE, BUT CONSENTS TO WALK AT HIS OWN FUNERAL—HE UNDERTAKES A CAPITAL JOURNEY—TOM HAMILTON FISHES, AND CATCHES A LARGER FISH THAN HE EXPECTED—HE MORALIZES AND EXHORTS.

"SEEN the ghost! By jingo, that's good," cried the peer, as he sat with his son and Tom Hamilton at breakfast the next morning. "Freddy, you are a ninny-hammer. There's no such thing as a ghost; and no spirit but brandy—that's worth drinking at all events. Never suffer such stuff to get into your head as that, boy. You've been about something that you shouldn't; and then that cursed, cowardly thing called conscience has got hold of you, and made you fancy you saw something."

"But—I—did—see it," drawled forth Mr. Fitzurse; "I saw it as plain as the nose on your face."

"Not very plain, either," cried Tom Hamilton; "for, by Jove, his lordship's face is all of one colour; and his nose is like a spot in the sun—one wants a smoked glass to see it. If you had said as plain as Jerry Tripe's nose, I could have understood you, Fitzurse. But come, tell us what the ghost is like: I should like to see it mightily."

"Pooh, pooh!" cried the peer; "he was either drunk, or foolish, or in a fright, or else some of the maids dressed themselves up to terrify him. What was it like, Freddy; what was it like?"

"Ah, you may all laugh if you please," said the honourable scion, "but you'd have been in as great a fright as I was, if you had seen her."

"Then it was a she ghost," cried the peer; "by jingo, she had better not come near me, for I would make her pay for it one way or another. What was she like, Freddy, I say? was she a tall, long, lanky thing, with goggle eyes, and a mouth from ear to ear?"

"No, no," answered his son, who, to say the truth, had taken a much more accurate survey of the supposed ghost than might have been expected; "she was young and pretty enough if she hadn't been so white; and she was not very tall either—something between the height of Jane and Sally, our two house-maids; but she was as white as a sheet, and moved along without any step."

"She must have gone upon castors," said Tom Hamilton. "Was she dressed in a white sheet, Fitzurse?"

"No, not at all," answered his friend, impatiently. "She was very like one of the pictures in the gallery—the third from the west door."

"Ay," cried the peer, seeming to be suddenly plunged by his son's words into the stream of memory, and struggling for a minute against the current, before he could reach the bank again; "ay, poor thing!—D——n her, she behaved very ill; but I was sorry for her after she was gone. Like that picture, do you say, Freddy? Like my sister?"

"No, not just like that," said the Honourable Frederick Henry Augustus—"not just like that, either; for the woman in that picture is all pink and rosy; and the ghost was white and blue, but she had on a grey, silvery sort of satin with a little black mantilla and hood though."

The rubicund countenance of the peer underwent some of those variations of colour which we sometimes see take place in the wattles of an agitated turkey-cock. His face, in short, made a great effort to turn white; and though it could not accomplish the feat entirely, on account of certain pertinacious bumps and knobs which varied from red to blue, under the emotion of the moment, yet the plain from which these rose—the ground-plan of his countenance, if one may so call it—became of an ashy paleness, and even his lips lost the hue of life.

"Hallo! open the window," cried Tom Hamilton; "throw some water in his face."

"No, no," cried the peer, walking to the fire-place, and ringing the bell. "No water, any way! Jerry, give me a glass of brandy. D——n me, he saw the ghost too! There must be something in it, by jingo!"

"But what's the matter, my lord?" cried Tom Hamilton.

"What is the matter, most noble dad?" asked Mr. Fitzurse. "I never saw you turn pale at the name of grey satin before."

"Hark ye," said the peer, lowering his voice, "don't say any thing more about it. It was in that very grey satin and black mantilla she was dressed, when I caught her going to run away with the fellow from the ball. I gave her a terrible horsewhipping, and they say she never recovered it; so I have not horsewhipped any one since. But don't talk any more about it. D——n me, Jerry Tripe, are you never going to give me that brandy? Do you wish me to die of gout in the stomach? Why you're as white as a sheet yourself, you fool—all except your nose, and that looks like a red-hot shot on a snowball. Ha! ha! ha! ha!" and the peer laughed till the colour came back into his face.

"Ah, my lord—ah, my lord," cried Jerry Tripe, with his knees trembling underneath him, "it's no joke, I can tell you. I saw her myself, with my own eyes, just as she was that night; and she asked me——"

"Hold your tongue, you idiot," cried the peer, seizing him by the throat. "Get out of the room, and go into the library;" and pushing him out of the door, his lordship snatched the bottle of brandy from the butler's hand, and, returning to the table, half filled one of the tea-cups and drank it off.

"Fiddlstick's end!" he cried; "there's no such thing as a ghost. It's all a fudge. Freddy, I wonder you can be such a nincompoop!"

Tom, I want some trout for dinner : can't you go and fetch me some, and take Freddy with you ?”

“ Why, my lord,” replied Tom Hamilton, “ that would never do. I am liable to be arrested upon the coroner's warrant, and so is my honourable friend, as they have it in parliament, for the jury brought in their verdict against himself. No, no ; it would never answer for one of the murderers to go fishing with the dead man. If I go at all, I must put on my doctor's wig, and he must stay at home. But when do you intend to bury him ?”

“ I had forgot—I had forgot,” cried the peer. “ By jingo, we must bury him !”

“ I'll be d—d if I'm buried,” cried the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus.

“ Not unlikely,” said Tom Hamilton, drily.

“ Nonsense, nonsense, Freddy,” cried the peer ; “ you must be buried. By jingo ! you shall be buried : but you shall walk at your own funeral, my boy. You shall be your own cousin, and come down from London to attend the *sad ceremony*. We'll get some Tyrian dye, Tom, and black this load of whey-coloured oakum he's got upon his cheeks ; and then, with a dark-brown Brutus, a white handkerchief, and a black coat, he will look as unlike Frederick Fitzurse as a black-faced ram to a white poodle. Then we'll introduce you to the young lady, Freddy : you must be as sweet upon her as the bottom of an unstirred teacup, press her home, get her to marry you, as the French girls do, for the sake of her liberty, and then the old man's money is secured beyond all chance or risk. But I must run and talk to Jerry Tripe. You, Tom, go and catch the trout ; and we'll make a regular night of it here, for we must keep the boy merry, now we have made a corpse of him, and not let him get melancholy in his grave situation.”

Thus saying, the peer quitted the room ; Tom Hamilton walking to the window, with a look of thought such as did not often visit his merry countenance.

“ So, Fitzurse,” he said, as soon as the peer was gone, “ you have really seen the ghost, have you ?”

The promising young gentleman looked somewhat dogged, imagining that his friend was going to amuse himself a little at his expense. The weak and the vicious have always a misty consciousness of being open at various points to the lash of censure and satire, not unlike that vague and overpowering conviction of a future state, with its rewards and punishments, which oppresses the mind of the sceptic. Both classes attempt to shelter themselves under the assumption of a cold indifference ; but both are in reality sensitively alive to the least word that shows them their weakness, their wickedness, or their folly.

“ It is no use talking to you, Tom,” said Mr. Fitzurse ; “ but I think my eyes are as good as another man's, let him be what he may ; and what I saw, I saw. You may laugh if you like, but it's very true, I tell you.”

“ Oh, I do not laugh at all,” replied Tom Hamilton gravely. “ I believe in ghosts fully, for my own part ; only it does not do to let it

out always, for fear people should laugh. I don't see any reason why there should not be plenty of ghosts, though I never saw one. What sort of a thing is it?"

"Why, just like a woman," said Mr. Fitzurse, "only very white; and then one could see the wainscot through it in different places you know, and all that sort of thing."

"What wainscot?" asked Tom Hamilton.

"Why the wainscot just in the picture-gallery," rejoined the heir-apparent of the house of Outrun. "It came in at the west door, or at least from that quarter, and swept along by us out at the other side by the great staircase towards the haunted rooms, as the people call them. I have often heard people talk of it before, but never thought that we should see it there."

"Us?" said Tom Hamilton; "we? Then there was more than one of you?"

"Yes, there were two," said Mr. Fitzurse, winking one of his fish-like eyes in a significant manner.

"I understand—I understand," said Tom Hamilton, laughing; "but I'll tell you what I would do if I were you, Fitzurse. You know the actors and actresses won't perform upon the stage in any part where there's a supper, without having real meat and drink before them. Now I wouldn't be supposed, if I were you, to come down from London to attend the funeral, without going up to London first, and spending a day or two there. I'd go to his lordship directly, and make him give me enough to carry me through for two or three days in grand style. It is better being up there while you must lie dead, than down here hiding away in your own room, like a rat that has caught sight of the cat."

Mr. Fitzurse took the hint in a moment, not a little glad, to say the truth, to get out of his state of temporary imprisonment. The plan for conveying him away unseen, or, at least, unrecognised, was speedily concocted between himself and Tom Hamilton, who, as the reader may have perceived, had a peculiar genius for all sorts of plots and contrivances; and that matter being settled, away he rushed to his worthy father, whom he found in deep and earnest conference with that respectable functionary, Jeremy Tripe. His lordship saw but one impediment, and that was the money.

"My dear boy," he cried, "I've scarce got enough to bury you decently. I'm sorry I did not subscribe to the burial society in the village, where I see there are two or three places vacant; but I've got but thirty pounds in the house. We're hard up, I tell ye, Freddy, and must get this girl somehow, or we're done."

Jeremy Tripe, however, like a generous and self-devoted servant, came to the aid of his young master, and offered to lend him twenty pounds out of his own private resources, which, as the reader is well aware, he had peculiar means of recruiting, under the influence of the fair planet: he exacted nothing but a note of hand bearing interest, and the whole thing was speedily settled to the satisfaction of all. Mr. Fitzurse was smuggled out of the castle, through the park, and

by the fields, under the garb of a ploughman, and took his way to London by the first conveyance he could find; promising to return in three days for the funeral, under the garb and appearance of a supposititious first cousin.

In the meanwhile, Tom Hamilton whistled three bars of the Welsh air called, "Of noble race was Shenkin," which perhaps might have some occult reference to the family in whose dwelling he was domiciled; and then tapping his forehead two or three times, he said, "The picture-gallery! Well, well, we will see. The ass hasn't wit enough to get such a story up out of his own fancy: you might as well imagine a deal box to produce the effect of the phantasmagoria, as his thick head to produce any thing fanciful. No, no, there must be some reality in the thing; but I will soon see whether this ghost be tangible or not. I've no great fear of it, if it come in an unsubstantial form, and still less if it come in a substantial one; but I'll shake hands with it, whatever way it appears, or know the reason why."

Having formed this bold resolve, the result of which will be made known to the reader at an after-period, Tom Hamilton retired to his own chamber, donned a fisherman's dress of greenish fustian—let me recommend the same to all my readers and true lovers of the angle, as the only garb, when completed with a green velvet cap and broad shade for the eyes, which will escape the shrewd glance of those wary old trout, who having been pricked with the hook, take fright at every thing that looks too bright—and with rod in hand, and basket upon back, sallied forth to the banks of the stream that ran through the Outrun estate, totally forgetting the necessity of concealing himself from the pursuit of parish-constables.

After flogging the water for an hour, and catching but two insignificant fish, Tom Hamilton, perceiving that his speckled friends were no longer at feed, sauntered down the river for three or four miles, and then sat himself down upon the bank, constructing flies, and examining lines, in order to give time for the gentry of the stream to recover their appetite. He proposed to fish back again in the cool of the afternoon; and in the meanwhile spent his time very comfortably, being, in fact, a man in whom a naturally good heart supplied occasionally the want of principle, and with whom a warm imagination often prompted to that sort of meditation which, in others, is the child of a thoughtful disposition. He liked to look upon the water and see it run glistening by, without very well knowing why or wherefore. He liked to hear the birds singing in the bushes round; he liked seeing the blue water-fly play upon the bosom of the stream: it was all an enjoyment to his mind, without the fatigue of thought, and thus a couple of hours passed pleasantly over his head, in that careless sort of happiness which was the temptation to half his faults: for depend upon it, good reader, a great portion of mankind are wicked because their minds are not active enough to be good.

Certain indications that he saw on the water near, the quick dart of a small trout at a may-fly, and some passing clouds sweeping over the sky, at length induced Tom Hamilton to try his hand again,

and this time he proved more successful than before. A voracious fellow of some two pounds' weight was soon landed on the bank, and walking gently onward, he took his way back to the castle through a sweet valley, wooded here and there in such a manner that it was scarcely possible to cast a line, but every now and then opening out into small meadows, with the stream rippling along between banks of turf, from which the fishing was most delectable. His basket was growing heavy, but with the pertinacity of a true fisherman he went on, till the stream, broad and smooth, though shallow, ran between some deep wood, which cast a cool green shadow on the limpid surface of the water, scarcely suffering the sun, even at his highest noon, to peep at the clear mirror which reflected all the verdant things around.

Below was a tumbling pool of considerable depth, between high cliffy banks wooded on one side, bare on the other; and as Tom Hamilton knew that the deep eddies hereabouts were the resort of many a patriarchal fin, he waded into the water above the pool, and approached it with a slow and cautious step, there being no place on the bank from which he could fish.

He had got his rod over his head, with the line and fly depending behind, ready to cast the latter delicately to the tail of a ripple, where usually lodged a large sagacious trout which had often before set all his arts at defiance. But just at the moment he was going to throw, there was a quick step on the bank above, and looking through some leafy boughs that made a green screen above his head, he saw a bonnet, and a shawl, and fluttering ribands. The wearer approached the bank, not perceiving any one below, and looked over into the tumbling waters of the pool, gazing down upon them for a moment as if she had lost something. She then took a step or two back, paused for a minute, and again ran quickly forward to the very edge; but when she reached it courage seemed to fail her, and she stopped. Pausing, she once more looked down, while, still as death, Tom Hamilton watched the result, without betraying his presence by a single movement. At length the girl seemed moved by some sudden strong emotion, and clasping her hands together, she cried, "My poor mother!" and leapt at once from the bank.

The waters received her, and she disappeared with a gurgling whirl; but casting away rod and line, in an instant Tom Hamilton plunged over the little ledge of stone which caused the rapid, caught the girl by the cloak, and then by the arms as she rose, and holding her at a distance to avoid the convulsive clutch with which she now sought to grasp him, he swam with her to the bank, and drew her out, panting, bewildered, and half dead.

"In the name of heaven, Jane!" he exclaimed, "what has made you commit such a folly?"

At first poor Jane did not answer him, but continued to pant, and sob, and weep, for at least ten minutes. At length, however, she recovered breath and strength; and in that sort of *epanchement* of the heart which an escape from any great danger is sure to produce

—especially in nouns of the feminine gender—she poured forth a story which shall not be told to the reader. I rather think that it is unnecessary, indeed, and that enough may have been guessed to render all the first part of her history quite intelligible, without further explanation. The second part may be told in the six words with which she ended her tale. “And now he has left me!” she said, and covering her eyes with her hands, she again wept bitterly.

“Jane, you are a silly girl,” said Tom Hamilton, who was suddenly seized with a spirit of admonition. “Get up directly, go home, and dry your clothes. You are a silly girl, I say; and have just committed a very silly act. He has only gone to London for two days; and if I had not been by, would have come back on Friday, and found you drowned. Never let your passions run away with you, or think that you can remedy one wrong thing by doing another: it is like a drunken man who takes another bottle of wine to sober himself, and only gets drunker than before. Besides, my poor girl, of all the ills of life, there is none irremediable but death: it puts the seal upon the parchment, Jane, and conveys the estate away from us for ever. If you should ever be tempted to do such a thing again, recollect,—first, that you may not know much of the circumstances of the present; secondly, that you cannot know any thing of the circumstances of the future. You may always be mistaken a good deal about your own situation at the moment; you are almost certain of being mistaken as to what the next moment will produce. Here you mistook about Fitzurse having left you altogether, when he is to return directly; and you thought in five minutes to have drowned yourself, and yet here you are as much alive as ever. Perhaps, my good girl, if I had not been near to save you, ere this time you might have found out likewise that you had made a mistake in thinking that death is peace. So now, go home and dry your clothes; and if Fitzurse has promised, as you say, to marry you——”

“I will show it to you, sir, in his own hand,” said Jane.

“Then let us hope he will keep his word,” replied Tom Hamilton: “I will try to make him do so——By Jove! what a fine fish! I must have him before I go. So run home and dry yourself, and say your prayers, and take a glass of brandy and water.”

Jane did as he bade her; and Tom Hamilton instantly waded into the water, and threw his line again. Whether it was that his morality had steadied his hand, or that virtue is always destined to be rewarded—I wish some one would reward mine—I know not; but certain it is that he caught the fish which had baffled him twenty times before, and went on his way well contented.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. DE EUNASTIO DINES IN GOOD COMPANY—SOME OPINIONS UPON POLITICS AND COOKERY—THE CHEVALIER FULFILLS HIS MISSION—HE RETURNS HOME AND HEARS SOME PLEASANT NEWS.

HAVING now deliberately scattered all our characters over the whole face of England, and left no two of them together, except Worrel and the Chevalier de Lunatico, we shall presently proceed to bring them all together again, just as nature, acting by alternate expansion and contraction, produces all the marvellous operations of the physical world. The truth is, dear reader—for this book, like all others of the present day, professing to teach every thing that is necessary to be known in life, I may as well give you a hint of my notions on natural philosophy—the truth is, dear reader, that nature, which has been said to act by impulses, does in reality act by expansion and contraction, and thus is it brought about. This world, you are well aware, and all that it contains, is composed of atoms—Dalton proved it, and I believe it. Each of these atoms has its poles; and each is in a continual whirl round its own axis; but the apices of its axis are not its poles; and, in fact, are at right angles with them: consequently, the attracting and repelling poles of each atom are alternately brought in opposition to each other; in the one case giving a tendency to expand, and in the other to contract. Each solid body is in truth a microcosm of atoms; and each agglomeration of atoms acts as a larger atom upon its neighbour, having its poles alternately attracting and repelling those of the other, and tending to contract or expand the whole mass. Thus the heart beats, the blood flows, the seasons change, and all the other phenomena that surround us in this strange, hydraulic machine, wherein the spirit has a lodging, take place, expanding and contracting, even as the child expands from the cradle into the magistrate's chair, and contracts again into the dust of the coffin.

There, dear reader, it is as good a theory as any other, depend upon it. I hope you understand it, though I do not quite myself; but as the old writers would have said—"there's something in it—and so make the most of it!"

To return to our muttons, however. Before we re-unite, in the same orbit, all our wandering stars, and make them finish out the course they have only just begun—for heaven only knows where or how this book will end—we must separate the chevalier from his young friend, for a time, and take him to the first and last dinner-party which he was at in London at this time. The invited, to the number of seven, were present.

at the minister's house, at the appointed hour, with the exception of the chevalier himself, who, knowing the best means of giving himself importance, took especial care to be just sufficiently too late to make the inviter turn his eyes to a small china clock, but not sufficiently out of time to overdo the fish by a single bubble. The party all stood round a small fire which had been lighted to make the place look cheerful; and the minister, who might perhaps have turned his back with contempt upon the first literary or scientific man of his own land, being somewhat fond of exhibiting rare birds, very naturally eulogized the chevalier to the skies, simply because he came from the moon. On his right hand was a fellow minister, named the Earl of Easygo, a stout and sagacious personage, with a bland, good-humoured countenance, which might have been rather dull had it not been for a certain expression which the French would call *fin*. On the other side was a very great man, indeed: one who, to use the classical and highly expressive term of the nation, that dwell about the elephant and castle—was “up to any thing.” He had already filled half the offices of the government, and done a great many other things. He was tall and stately in person; and, having a grand idea of his own personal qualifications, a strain of eloquent insipidity hung ever upon his tongue, while his limbs fell into attitudes almost worthy of Joey Pike. This was the Marquis of Abissee, who, being greatly smitten with his colleague's account of the chevalier, at the cabinet dinner of the day before, had particularly requested to be introduced to him. Standing in front of them was one possessed of no particular graces of person, and with a face in which it was difficult to detect much intellect; for, at first sight, it seemed more like a nursery apple-pudding, just out of the cloth, than any thing else upon earth. When one looked nearer, however, there might be seen in the eyes a glance of strong intelligence; while upon the lip hung the smile of kindness of heart and generous feelings: ay, and even amongst the awkward motions of somewhat ungainly limbs there was the gentlemanly air not to be mistaken; the high spirit of a high race shining through the crust in which nature had clad it, as we see the bright internal fire through the fissures of the rude, grey lava.

A phenomenon, in the shape of a wealthy man of letters, made up the fourth. Nature had intended him for a jester; and, had he lived some centuries before, he might have lashed the follies of a court in a gay cap and bells; but fortune had set him on a couch of down; and, as nobody could doubt that his Hippocrene flowed from a rich source, he was held a mighty judge of literature, and directed by his taste the ministerial favours into such channels as he chose, when the stream of bounty turned for a moment towards the arts. The rest of the party consisted of several noughts, which after all are the most useful things both in society and arithmetic, easily divided, easily multiplied, and in politics, more than any where else, giving the value, of place to the figure that goes before them.

“An extremely clever man, indeed,” said the minister to his tall colleague, speaking apparently of the Chevalier de Lunatico. “An extremely clever man, indeed; a keen diplomatist, I should think, with

all the jaunty and unconcerned air of our good friend Metternich; and with that same shrewd, intelligent twinkling of the clear, grey, moon-light eye under the bushy brow, which distinguishes the Austrian Machiavel. He is evidently a liberal in principle; indeed, he tells me that such is the general feeling of his country. He sees clearly the tendency and progress of the human mind towards the casting off of all shackles, civil, political, commercial, and religious, and is undoubtedly at heart, an advocate of a free trade in every thing except men."

"I am glad to hear he takes in women," said the Earl of Easygo, chuckling.

"Good name, in man or woman—good, my lord, is the immediate jewel of the soul," said the Marquis of Abissee, putting himself into John Kemble.

"And, like diamond rings and other jewels, is very soon lost," said the man of letters, "as your lordship must be practically aware."

"I am afraid, in this life," joined in the fourth statesman, to whom we have not given a name, but whom we shall call Lord Fitznorth—"I am afraid, in this life, that such jewels are very often false, Abissee; and that one half of our good dowagers, as well as of our dignified peerage, if they would but unlock the casket and let us examine a little closely, this 'immediate jewel of the soul' would be found to have nothing but paste set in pinchbeck, while the real diamond had gone long ago to the pawnbrokers."

All the noughts smiled simultaneously.

"He means the pop-shop, Abissee," said the Earl of Easygo; "you don't know what the pawnbrokers mean, do you?"

"Oh! yes, he must know very well," cried the jester—"as one of the present ministry he must know very well."

"How so, how so?" demanded the secretary of state.

"Because they have given so many pledges which they cannot redeem," replied the man of letters, "that none of them can be ignorant of the meaning of——"

"My uncle's," cried the earl, laughing. "You are quite right, you are quite right. By Jove! we shall have to pawn some of the crown jewels next."

"Are you sure that your lordship has not done so already?" asked the jester.

Every one was silent, and the personage who had spoken felt himself witty; for the reader is doubtless aware, that a professed joker derives one half of his reputation from saying things that most men would be either too kind or too courteous to utter.

It was at this awful moment, when four at least of the men in the room felt very much inclined to knock the man of letters down, and might have done it too if they had not had the fear of ridicule before their eyes, that the door of the room opened, and the Chevalier de Lunatico was announced. He was dressed with his own peculiar neatness and propriety, having on a dark blue coat with a considerable number of small gold buttons, not unlike the star-studded sky of a clear night. The lower part of his person was clad in black tights, like the far edge of

the same sky, and lace stockings. His shirt, which was fastened with studs of moon stone, had a small, fine, narrow frill, like the edge of a white cloud; and his face was resplendently moonshiny, clear, and intelligent, though there was a little *empressement* in his manner as if he sought to appear ashamed of being too late, without being in reality ashamed at all.

"I beg ten thousand pardons," he said, approaching the minister with a quick easy air, and then setting his two heels altogether, and making a formal bow, "I see by the clock in your hall I am ten minutes too late. Is your time accurate?"

"Solar time, chevalier; solar time," said the minister.

"Ay! unfortunately mine is lunar time," said the chevalier; at which the noughts laughed, thinking that he meant a joke, and the jester lifted up his ears, under apprehension lest any one might venture to trespass upon his ground.

"My Lord of Easygo, the Chevalier de Lunatico! Abissee, the Chevalier! Fitznorth—Lord Fitznorth, Chevalier!"

The man of letters was next introduced, who thinking that he must say something, replied to the chevalier's bow by inquiring whether it was not very cold in his planet?

"No, sir," replied the chevalier, "it is a great receptacle for hot-headed men; and, as far as I can see, there is no place in the universe to be compared to this great town of London for cold-hearted ones."

"There are warm-hearted ones enough on the other side of the channel," said Lord Fitznorth, "as you will find if you choose to visit the sister island, chevalier."

"I shall certainly visit it before I have done," said Mr. de Lunatico, "though I think I have formed a very just estimate of it merely from hearsay."

"Hearsay! The great resource of all travellers," said the jester, "and that which makes all their statements so very true."

"Hearsay!" exclaimed the marquis, "that will never do. Go thither—go thither, and see. 'Take physic, pomp,' expose thyself to feel what wretches feel."

"But let the chevalier tell us what his notion is," said Lord Fitznorth. "I should like much to hear. May we ask you to explain yourself, Mr. de Lunatico?"

"Certainly," replied our friend, with his usual graceful self-possession—and let me tell the reader, that it requires no little self-possession to be able at all times to explain what one means;—"Certainly; but first let me inform this noble lord, that my name is not Pomp, nor Pompey either,—which I believe is the epithet of a poodle dog and a Roman general. As to my notion of the sister island, as you call it, my lord—though, to say sooth, you have shown yourselves 'a little more than kin and less than kind' towards her—as to my notion, it is this. She is fertile in every thing that is good and beneficial; warm in her temperature, kindly in her skies, though somewhat subject to storms; but owing to unskilful cultivation in some parts, and total want of cultivation in others, the soil that might produce the most

abundant harvest brings forth many weeds,—some noxious, some useless, some covered with gay and flaunting flowers, but poisonous in their fruit ; while the most magnificent crops of all that is necessary for social life go to waste for want of reaping, and everywhere over the untilled land will-o'-the-wisps dance about to mislead the bewildered wanderer who sets his foot forth at night."

"Not a bad notion at all, upon my honour," said Lord Fitznorth. "But we intend to cultivate it, my good chevalier, and bring all this waste land into tillage."

"I am afraid, my lord," said the chevalier, "you have got a wrong plough and bad beasts to draw it."

"You have doubtless got a new invention," said the jester. "I never yet knew any man open his mouth about Ireland, who had not some nostrum for her cure ; and like every one given up to quacks, the patient has gone on from bad to worse, till now she is at the last gasp."

"Dinner is upon the table," said a servant, opening the doors ; and, marshalling his company with due gravity, the minister accompanied them to his dining-room. The conversation was now entirely changed ; wit, politics, learning, were all forgot. Cookery was the grand subject that was discussed : and the host himself, decrying, as in duty bound, the fare he set before his guests, vowed that there was too much sugar in the soup ; too much lemon in the curry ; the fish had not been kept quite long enough—for it is a mistake to suppose that fresh fish is a virtue ; that there was a *soupcou* of garlic in the *fillets de lapin*, which was horribly unclassical ; and that the *sauce-Robert* was nothing better than chopped onions and vinegar.

"The truth is," he said, "my *chef* is too fatigued. He exhausted his whole genius on the dinner yesterday, and to-day you see the effects of his lassitude."

Every body pronounced the dinner excellent, stood up for the reputation of the dishes, and applauded the powers of the cook.

"He seems to know how to go from grave things to light," said the joker ; "for this *vol-au-vent* is not less excellent than that *crapaudine*."

"And to know how to manage a blonde as well as a brunette," said the earl, "for this *bechamiel* is dressed like the Duchess of S——, and that *matelotte*, if it had but a string of jewels round it, might pass for Lady L——. After all," he continued, turning to the chevalier with a smile, as if laughing at himself while he spoke, "eating, as it is the first great necessary of life, is the grand and only durable enjoyment ; the pleasures which are linked with it are the only ones that last throughout existence, beginning with a bit of barley-sugar, and ending with the partridge-panada, besides all the graceful gradations of *becasse* and *becassine*, kidneys, and ducks' livers. Ambition, love, avarice,—they are all what your Germans call *einseitig*, or one-sided enjoyments. Eating comprises every thing, stretches over all space, extracts its inwards and its accessories from every thing in nature, and, if appetite and digestion be

nically balanced, affords that delightful alternation of desire and fruition which is interrupted by no interval, followed by no inconvenience."

"The gout, the gravel, and apoplexy; indigestion, cardiac, embarrassment, bile, spleen, chalk-stone, and paralysis; enlarged liver, difficulty of breathing, hydrothorax, phlegmatous tumours, cancer, and carbuncle, are things to which the vulgar are subject," said the chevalier; "but which, of course, by what your lordship observes, are unknown amongst the better ranks of society in your country. In ours, they generally follow a certain long-continued course of good-feeding, especially if it be carried to any degree of excess."

"They are always easily avoided," said the earl, smiling benignly upon him. "Chevalier, a glass of wine?"

"With pleasure, my lord," replied the chevalier; "but may I ask how you propose to avoid these things? the receipt will be worth taking to my own country."

"I will tell you an anecdote," said the earl, after bowing over some dry sillery. "There was once a famous man, known amongst us of the nether sphere as the Regent Duke of Orleans. He was a pattern to be imitated by all ministers and statesmen, having the grandest imperturbability of mind, and the vastest conception of pleasure, that any man ever possessed. Having given himself up for many years to eating and drinking, and other things that shall be nameless, some of his relations and flatterers, perceiving that he was growing somewhat fat, somewhat sleepy, and not very steady on his feet, teased him till he consulted a physician. The physician informed him, that if he went on enjoying the same innocent pleasures to the same degree, he would fall into palsy; or if he exceeded, which he had lately done in some ways, he would die of apoplexy. The regent gave him his fee, but would not let him write, saying that he had already prescribed for him in full; and that very night he set hard to work, eating and drinking more than ever. Every one asked him why he pursued such a course? to which question he replied, that it was his physician's prescription. One of his monitors, however, once ventured to ask him, '*A quelle fin?*' To which he replied, laughing, '*A l'apoplexie;*' which explained his object fully; and at the end of about six months he fell off his chair by the side of a very pretty woman, and was dead before she could do any thing to help him. Thus you see, it is always very easy to get rid of the terrible complaints you mention, without any fracas of doctor's carriages and labelled bottles. A good strong choke, an ineffectual bleeding, and the thing's done and over."

"And does your lordship intend to follow such a course?" demanded the chevalier.

"Not exactly," replied the Earl of Easygo; "my life's too valuable to the country," and he laughed low but merrily. "You are probably not aware," he added, subduing his voice almost to a whisper, "that I am the only really patriotic man in the whole cabinet? Sir, I am a modern Curtius: I fill up the gap in the forum. What I mean is, that all these other men find enjoyments in power. The exercise of

authority, the nightly logomachy of a house of parliament, the fancy that he is ruling the nation, are all real pleasures to our friend there at the top of the table : to me they are abominations that stink in the nose. Money, and show, and dignified parade, are all the objects of our friend Abissee there : to me they are vanity of vanities. While I have my town-house and my country-house, and have my man-cook, and eat of every thing that is good a little before the season, and drink the best wine that can be procured for love or money, and receive and return the visits of some score or two of pretty and not very severe ladies, keep my name out of Doctors' Commons, and do not rise much before twelve, I can be perfectly satisfied with a moderate income and easy mediocrity. But the service of my country calls me : I abandon the pursuits to which my tastes all lead,—I sit in the dull atmosphere of a House of Peers,—I bore myself to death a full hour and a half each day with the dull business of this dullest of all kingdoms. I act the part, in short, of minister, solely and simply to keep together a party disunited at every link, and to maintain them in those offices of which they are so fond."

"But, my lord," said the chevalier, "you doubtless find within yourself the talents necessary for such an undertaking ; and there must always be a pleasure in the exercise of great abilities upon great objects."

"Oh, dear, no," replied the earl. "I believe, it is true, that I have about tenfold the talents of any of my colleagues ; but indeed, my dear chevalier, I can but very seldom bring myself to exercise them at all upon any objects, either great or small. There is nothing so great a bore as business ; and although to you, who seem, I know not why, to command one's confidence, I do not scruple to own that I feel within myself the power to write my name to-morrow upon the roll of fame, if I like it ; yet I can assure you, I would not take the trouble of mounting even a bill-sticker's ladder to placard myself among the greatest men of Europe.—Why, what is this you are giving me?"

"Only an invitation," said the chevalier, "to spend a short time in my country, where we will provide you with an easy-chair, in which all your talents and high qualities will be forgotten to your heart's desire."

"Oh, very well," said the earl, thrusting the billet into his coat-pocket without looking at it ; "I will come with great pleasure. We will fix a day another time."

The chevalier had never seen one of his billets received with so much *nonchalance* before, and could not help admiring the equability of the noble lord's mind ; but his attention was attracted to the conversation which was going on opposite, between the marquis, Lord Fitznorth, and the man of letters. It seemed indeed a continuation of that which had taken place in the drawing-room, concerning Ireland ; and the noble Lord Abissee was strongly contending for the necessity of putting a stop to crime in that country, by pardoning all offences ; and stopping riot and tumult, by discharging every magistrate that attempted to prevent them. Lord Fitznorth somewhat differed from his

noble friend; and the jester said that the marquis's plan put him in mind of the old fable, in which a man having been bit by a dog, dipped a piece of bread in the blood and gave it to the beast, whereupon the dog immediately bit him again.

"The way to stop roguery," exclaimed the marquis, "is decidedly to encourage rogues. It is only from want of encouragement that they are not honest men. The unjust partiality shown in bestowing favours and honours upon the upright, the peaceable, and the virtuous alone, naturally irritates and excites the neglected and ill-treated party of the violent, the turbulent, and the dishonest; they claim with a loud voice a fair share of the goods that are denied them, and sooner or later—if you resist the first great principle of equity, which teaches you to treat all men alike, without favour or distinction—they will exert that physical force, which exists in the masses, and take the portion which your injustice has denied them."

"Hear, hear!" cried their host, who had marked with signs of great approbation the speech of his noble friend; but the chevalier took out another billet, and as the table was too wide for him to hand it across, he held it in the palm of his hand ready to slip into that of the marquis as soon as they rose from table.

The conversation went on in the same strain for about three quarters of an hour more, and then the dessert having been concluded and a sufficient quantity of wine imbibed, coffee was served, which seemed to bring its own particular sort of conversation with it; parties, feasts, and entertainments became the topic; pretty women, fine ankles, beautiful eyes were discussed and commented upon; and at length the carriages were announced, and the chevalier took his departure, slipping his billet quietly into the hand of the marquis, who looked startled and aghast when he read the contents, while the earl laughed merrily and offered him a place in his carriage to the moon.

The vehicle which contained the chevalier rolled him rapidly back to his dwelling-place, and mounting the stairs in a slow and meditative mood, he was surprised to hear from the sitting-room in which he had left Worrel, the sound of voices talking loud and gaily, and a light peal of laughter in Worrel's own particular tones. On opening the door, however, his wonder was redoubled, for there at the table with his young friend, with a bottle of wine between them, his good-humoured face radiant with smiles, his pig-tail as stiff as that of a young porker, his bald forehead shining like a mirror, and a blue coat with a powdered collar, and gilt buttons upon his back, was no other than Jerry Longmore, Esquire, late of Ivy-Hall, in the county of——. Never was there so cheerful a countenance as Mr. Longmore bore! Harry Worrel, too, Harry Worrel himself, whom the chevalier had left falling rapidly into a state of lackadaisicality, which he expected would soon carry him to the grave, was now looking as blithe as a morning milk-maid, and with a glass of wine raised nearly to the level of his eye, was exclaiming, "Here's success to her pursuit!"

The chevalier paused, contemplating the scene, and thinking whether he had two more tickets in his pocket; but as soon as they

saw him, both Mr. Longmore and Worrel started up; one caught him by the one arm, and the other caught him by the other; they drew him to the table, presented him with a glass of wine, and exclaimed simultaneously, "Drink, drink our new toast—health and long life to our dear Laura! She's alive, chevalier, she's alive!" cried Harry Worrel. "Mr. Longmore has had a letter from her in her own hand."

"Yes, my dear chevalier," said Mr. Longmore, "she must be incombustible. Nothing set her on fire but love: ha, Worrel?" and he touched his young friend on the fifth rib with the tip of his fore-finger. "We are a wonderful family, chevalier—we are a wonderful family! We may well say now, that we will go through fire and water to serve our friends."

"Well," said the chevalier, "if she be alive and well, that is all we have to care about, and the best news it is that I have heard since I came from the moon. Here's dear Laura Longmore, and long life to her."

CHAPTER XXX.

JERRY TRIPE IS RAISED TO THE POST OF AMBASSADOR—THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A MONOSYLLABLE—MR. TRIPE, LIKE ALL WISE PLENIPOTENTIARIES, TAKES A HIGH POSITION—LOVE BRINGS HIM LOW—HE COMMITS A FAUX-PAS, WHICH PROVES A DIRTY BUSINESS—HE IS RESCUED AND CONSOLED.

“Go immediately, Jerry Tripe,” cried the peer, after the Honourable Henry Augustus Fitzurse had taken his departure—“go immediately and see for it. I will not be without it any longer; the woman can’t know the value of it. I don’t believe he destroyed it.”

“Nor I either, my lord,” said Jerry Tripe; “for he told me he hadn’t, three months ago, when I just delicately hinted that it might be as well to diminish the annuity your lordship gave him.”

The reader will perceive—perhaps may have perceived long ago—that the word “it” is the most convenient, comfortable, extensive, comprehensive, benevolent, and sublime in the English language. Like charity it covers a multitude of sins; like equity it makes no distinction of sexes, ages, qualities, or degrees; it spares many a blush, it saves many a lie, it tells many a pleasant tale without divulging any secret, it conceals many an important fact from the ears of all but those who ought to know them. It leaves that misty indistinctness about any object that chooses to shroud itself under its mantle which is one great source of the sublime and poetical; and amongst all the contentions of logicians and grammarians, nouns, pronouns, and genders, it stands neuter. How often does an “*it*” mean the sweetest, how often the most terrible thing in life? “Will you do *it*, dearest?” may mean, “will you steal a long, sweet, pleasant walk with me through shady lanes and flowering fields, and hear me tell a tale of love often told, but always dearer for repetition?” I have done *it*, may mean, I have broken a father’s heart, murdered a dear friend, seduced an innocent girl, or any other of those blasting acts that wither up the stems of happiness within us for ever.

Whatever was meant by the *it* which the noble viscount and his trusty coadjutor employed on the present occasion, they took especial care to use no more definite and sturdy expression; and, consequently, we must not venture to explain that which the parties concerned kept secret. The pronoun *he*, however, was very soon made more intelligible by Mr. Jerry Tripe, who, upon his lord directing him to go down and tear it out of his coffin if he could not find it elsewhere, exclaimed—“Why, my lord, the old earth-worm is buried; they buried him yesterday morning.”

"By jingo!" exclaimed the peer; "why the breath was scarcely out of his body."

"Oh! yes, my lord," replied the butler, shooting a shrewd glance at him along the line of his proboscis. "Mrs. Scapulary declared he began to stink."

"More than probable, more than probable," cried the peer. "By jingo! the old vermin has been worse than the butt end of a fox for the last ten years. However, we must have it, Jerry. Go down and contrive it somehow: coax and wheedle, and bully and threaten, and bribe and corrupt, and any thing—but get it. You are never at a loss for a resource, Jerry; and, if needs must be, promise her a hundred pounds. I will give her a bill for it."

"Which will be read this day six months, I suppose, my lord," said Jerry.

"Yes, yes," cried the peer, who was a learned man in his own way; "we will date it on the thirtieth of February, and pay it in the Greek kalends."

"I understand, I understand, my lord," replied the butler. "I will set out directly, and offer the widow my assistance in looking over her accounts."

Thus saying, he made his bow and departed, taking his way across the park towards the gate nearest to the house of Mrs. Scapulary. As Mr. Tripe, though a stout and portly man, was an active one also, and carried his flesh with vigour, he had soon reached the gate of the widow, passing over, by a small foot bridge, the little stream or rather ditch into which the sewer of the village emptied itself.

The cottage of the defunct Mr. Scapulary came close upon this ditch, and many people marvelled that he was fond of such a residence: some profanely assigning as a reason, that the ditch, as seen from his window, bore exactly the appearance of a large grave; and others less coarsely asserting, that it emitted an odour of fresh earth which they supposed must be pleasant to the olfactories of the sexton.

Mr. Tripe found Mrs. Scapulary in the parlour, standing upon a tea-caddy put upon the seat of a chair, for the purpose of examining the top of a corner cupboard—"her poor deceased Scapulary," as she observed, "having strange ways with him, especially in regard to hiding away sums of money in divers extraordinary places."

"Let me help you, my dear creature," said Jerry Tripe, as the lady explained to him the cause of her elevation. "I know all the good man's tricks and contrivances."

"Ah! you were an old friend of his, I think, Mr. Tripe," replied the lady, in a mournful tone.

"Oh! I knew him many years," said the peer's butler, "before you were born or thought of, my dear: but I'll help you with all my heart. You know I'm a man of honour, and will pocket nothing."

Mrs. Scapulary wished that others would act upon the same principle; and thinking Mr. Tripe a very nice man, she accepted the aid

he proffered, watching him notwithstanding out of the corner of her eye, to make quite sure that his fingers were not like the measure lent to Ali Baba by his brother, which the reader will recollect was so well greased with fat, that a piece of gold adhered to it, without being discovered by the person who employed it.

Up she got upon the chair again, and Jerry Tripe upon a stool hard by; and he looked at the top of a commode, while she moved some little porcelain flower-pots and an old hat on the top of the cupboard. Jerry Tripe thought this a very fitting opportunity for breaking the business upon which he came; and now, raised from the surface of the earth like two church steeples, they held a long conversation, in the course of which Mr. Tripe explained to her that he had come down by his lord's order to receive from her, as the dead man's representative, a certain piece of paper which belonged to his lordship, but which had always accidentally been left in the hands of Mr. Scapulary.

"And pray, Mr. Jerry, what is it? and what is it like?" said Mrs. Scapulary.

"What it is," replied Jerry, "I cannot tell ye; but it is very like a leaf out of a register. However, there's the name of old Mapleson, the present parson's grand-uncle, upon it. So if you find it, let me have it directly; for it is no use to any one except my lord, who wants it to make up the genealogy of the family."

"I didn't know that they had any *geeny*," replied Mrs. Scapulary; "or alogy either for that matter."

"Lord bless ye!" exclaimed Mr. Tripe, powerfully astounded at her ignorance. "Genealogy is what makes every father know his own son."

"It's a mighty clever thing then," said Mrs. Scapulary. "But, however, I haven't seen the thing yet, or I'd give it you. Just look in that dark corner, Mr. Tripe."

Mr. Tripe stretched forth his hand, and said nothing for a moment, but then returned to the attack, saying in an insinuating tone, "Old Scap. used to keep it in his breeches-pocket, I think."

"Ay then that blackguard!" cried Mrs. Scapulary, thrown off her guard. "That blackguard has got it with the rest."

"What blackguard, my dear lady?" asked Mr. Tripe.

"Why, the murderer, to be sure," replied Mrs. Scapulary, recovering herself, with immense and wonderful presence of mind. "When I came back, Mr. Tripe, upon that eventful morning, the first thing I saw were the poor dear breeches in the middle of the floor. They were grey breeches, Mr. Tripe, as you well know, and both the pockets were turned out. Now, I know for certain, that there was a good lot of money in those pockets, for he used always to keep some stray guineas, and two or three bank-notes, and a number of other papers in his right-hand breeches-pocket, notwithstanding all I could say. But he was an obstinate old devil, it must be confessed. They're all gone, howsumdever, and the register leaf amongst them, I'll bet."

"Goot tay, maddame! goot tay; how did you was. I am extreme glad to see you up so high. Hope to see you higher yet, wid all my heart. Good mornin', sair! hope you be vary well, but I see it, indeed—you got such colare in your nose."

"Who the devil is this?" asked Mr. Tripe in a loud whisper.

"Oh! a French woman from London," said Mrs. Scapulary. "She's always about the cottage now. I wonder why she comes boring here?"

The lady seemed to catch the last words, and replied with a smirk and a courtesy—

"No! no! you mistake. My name not Boring. Doctor Boring bore de House of Commons. He bore de country. D——n large bore he make too. Bore many thousand pounds out of it, *sapristy*. But you come down, dear Maddame Scapulaire, I tell you something very nice."

And approaching a chair, Mademoiselle Brochet shook her petticoats, and sat down with a smirk and a simper, and then fell into an attitude of pretty languor, which might have suited Perlet in one of his many transformations.

"Well, I never saw!" said Mrs. Scapulary, "these French women do take it easy. What is it that you want, Miss Broshay? You see I am busy now looking for things."

"Oh! not de least hurry out of de world. I can wait so long as you please. This goot gentilman will descend and amuse me. Standing there wid his nose over de *armoire*. He put me in mind of what I hear one leetle boy say—he clap himself upon his *ventre*, and say, 'My belly cry cupboard!'"

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried Jerry Tripe. "She's a jolly girl, upon my life!"

And slowly descending from his stool, he approached Mademoiselle Brochet, and entered into an interesting conversation with her.

Mademoiselle Brochet, as the reader may well suppose, was not in the slightest degree backward, but met the advances of Mr. Tripe with the most perfect ease, grace, and cordiality that it is possible to imagine. She fluttered, she smiled, she nodded, she wriggled, she glanced, she twittered like a swallow feeding its young ones; and, in short, a regular flirtation of a very serious character speedily commenced between the English butler and the French waiting-maid, so that worthy Mrs. Scapulary began to find herself one too many. Her stern virtue, however, was not of a character to suffer her to wink at the tender frailties of our nature; and descending first from the tea-caddy, and then from the chair, she approached Mademoiselle Brochet and Mr. Tripe, for the express purpose of interrupting them. The young lady, however, was the most perfect French woman that ever was seen, and seemed to have clasped on under her stays, that charming imperturbable self-satisfaction from which, as from a coat of armour, all "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" turn off innocuous. Even being interrupted in a *tele-a-tele*, could not throw her off her



Illustration of a domestic scene.



axis, and she turned round to greet the widow with as sweet and simpering a smile, as she had greeted Jerry Tripe.

"Oh! Maddame Scapulaire," she said, "I be glad to see you brought down. I have one leetle secret for you—Do you ever do any ting against de law?"

"Lord have mercy, no!" cried Mrs. Scapulary. "What can the woman mean?" she muttered to herself. "She always keeps me in a fright. Any thing again the law? I would not do any thing again the law for the world."

"Pooh! pooh!" cried Mademoiselle Brochet, "I mean leetle ting, leetle ting; not commit murder or robbery."

Mrs. Scapulary turned as white as a sheet.

"Lord, Mr. Tripe!" she exclaimed, "did you ever hear——? She makes me think of my dear defunct Scapulary."

"*Fidonc!*" cried Mademoiselle in her pretty interesting way. "Nevare you let any body make you tink of de dead husband dat is gone. Awkward subject dat, Maddame Scapulaire: always tink of de living one dat is coming. What use to get rid of de one, and be one widow, unless to get de oder, and be one wife again?"

"Very true! very true!" cried Jerry Tripe, squeezing her hand. "That is the true philosophy of the matter."

Mademoiselle Brochet gave him a leer that scorched him to the back bone; and adjusting her ringlets, with a look at the glass opposite, she went on as follows:

"Vell, but my dear Maddame Scapulaire, de leetel vickedness dat I ask you about is not at all vary big. Vat I mean is de contraband. You ever buy de beautiful lace, de pretty silk stocken, de *charmant* gloves? All so sheap too. No price not nothin' at all. And you, my dear Mr. Tripe, de beautiful silk handkerchief, de *foulards magnifiques*. Oh! so *charmant!* when you blow your nose—and a vary *important* nose it is—you feel as if you got him in a cloud, de *foulard* is so soft."

"I shan't buy none on 'em," said Mrs. Scapulary, turning up her nose, and mentally resolving that if Mademoiselle Brochet troubled her much more, she would denounce her for a smuggler. "I shan't buy none on 'em. I never cheat the revenue."

"Bah!" said Mademoiselle Brochet.

"Fiddlestick's ends!" said Mr. Tripe. "I shouldn't mind half a dozen at all, mademoiselle; and if you were to bring them yourself about nine o'clock up to the castle, we could just take a glass of curaçoa together in the pantry, and talk about all manner of things."

"Oh! but I not know de way," said Mademoiselle Brochet.

"Oh! it is just through the park," said Mr. Tripe. "Go over the little bridge here near the door, then by the stile into the park, and straight on. You can't miss it."

"Oh! but I be frighten," said Mademoiselle Brochet. "I be frighten to go trough de park all alone at night."

"I'll come and meet you at the stile, my dear," said Mr. Tripe.

"Ah!" said Mademoiselle Brochet, with a well-satisfied simper, "you vicked man, I tink, Mr. Tripe; but I will trust you."

"Woman, dear confiding woman!" cried Mr. Tripe.

"You show me de way to de stile, now," said Mademoiselle Brochet, "Maddame Scapulaire, I kiss your hand. I bring you, one of dese days, one little ting as a present; a *jolie cravatte*, so fine, so fine, it will go through one vedding ring. Vary nice, indeed, to tie round de troat—only must not tie it too tight, Madame Scapulaire—might strangle you you know. Ha, ha, ha! ha, ha, ha! very funny, Meester Tripe."

"I don't think it funny at all," said Mrs. Scapulary. "Never see such a woman in my life!"

"Dare say not," said Mademoiselle Brochet; "nor I, nevare. Adieu, adieu!" and with a low courtesy, and with a graceful bend of the head, she tripped out of the cottage, Mr. Tripe following her, and merely pausing to say, "don't forget the paper, my dear lady."

"No, no," said Mrs. Scapulary, impatiently; "you shall have it if I find it; but I'm sure the murderer took it away with him—at least if it was in the grey breeches-pocket."

Mr. Tripe was by the side of Mademoiselle Brochet in a minute: he found her pausing, in delicate hesitation, at the little foot bridge over the sewer and the stream which we have mentioned. Well might she do so indeed; for it consisted of nothing more than two planks without a railing; and below appeared a pool of somewhat black and odoriferous water, at the edge of which even a pair of ducks, who would have scavengered Lethe itself, stood in doubt and hesitation as to whether they would venture into the dark abyss before them.

"Suffer me to hand you over, mademoiselle," said Mr. Tripe, passing round her, advancing upon the bridge, and offering the tips of his fingers.

Mademoiselle followed timidly and slowly, step by step; but just when they had reached the middle of the bridge, where the elasticity of the planks began somewhat to be felt, the young lady became terrified, and exclaiming with a nervous shriek—"Oh! *mon Dieu*, I shall tumble in," she made a violent effort to save herself by catching at Mr. Tripe's collar.

It would seem that she missed her mark, however, and only succeeded in giving the worthy butler a terrible push upon the back which at once overthrew his balance. With a fearful squelch the large person of Mr. Tripe descended upon the dark waters, and was for a moment submerged, while Mademoiselle Brochet, after running on to the other side, stood wringing her hands, and exclaiming, "Oh, *mon Dieu*! Oh! Tripe, *mon cher* Tripe, you are drowned, you are lost! you are *perdu*. Help, help!"

Out rushed Mrs. Scapulary just as Mr. Tripe rose like Neptune from the bosom of the waves. His mother, had she seen him, would not have known her own son: not Tyrian dye, not henna and indigo could have restored the somewhat silvered locks of Mr. Tripe to their original



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blackness with half the effect of the waters from which he rose. His face, too, his eyes were all in tracts of swarthy slime; and the only thing that, proudly overcoming all that attempted to cloud its lustre, remained *in statu quo*, was the notorious nose, which, like the morning sun scattering away the clouds of night, burst rosy through the darkness that shaded the rest of his countenance.

"Ah, *voilà mon Tripe!*" exclaimed Mademoiselle Brochet. "Here, here! *tenez, tenez!* I will pull you ashore, I will save your *jolie* life," and she stretched out to the gasping butler the hook of her parasol.

If drowning men will grasp at straws it is not wonderful that Mr. Tripe seized eagerly the parasol; and had not Mademoiselle Brochet possessed some tolerable portion of strength the violent tug he gave would have pulled her in likewise. With skill, discretion, and firmness, however, she drew him towards the bank, giving him, it must be confessed, many an unsavoury dose of the black fluid in which he swam, but landing him at length safely, and then congratulating him most kindly upon his deliverance.

"Ha!" cried Jerry Tripe, when he was safely seated on the grass—"ha! how could you serve me such a trick, Miss Broshay?"

"A treak?" cried Mademoiselle—"I serve you no trick—you very near pull me into the vatare, my Tripe. Ah, good Maddame Scapulaire! if you could but bring a john-towel we would wipe him."

"A john-towel?" cried Mrs. Scapulary. "A jack-towel you mean, girl."

"Oh, *oui!* john or jack, all de same ting in Englis," cried Mademoiselle Brochet. "But you bring one towel, and we wipe him, for he is one vary dirty man."

"I say, Mrs. Scap," said Jerry, "haven't you got a drop of somewhat short to give us?—I dare say you could find a glass of gin."

"That I will, Mr. Tripe, with pleasure," said Mrs. Scapulary—for all people have some good point in their character, and hers was that of being really liberal in spirit—and away she went into the house to fetch the gin bottle and the towel.

During her absence Mademoiselle did all that was in the power of woman to console the afflicted Mr. Tripe.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "to see your beautiful countenance all so black, vid de nose just peeping trough like a rose-bud! but you will soon be quite lovely again ven you have got off dis dirt. A terrible place this world is, nothing bote man and woman always making one false step, and having one leetle fall. Oh, very shocking! But we get up again, put on de clean clothes, wash our face and hands, and tink of it no more."

The moralizing of Mademoiselle Brochet did Mr. Tripe very considerable good, and the gin of Mrs. Scapulary confirmed the beneficial effect. The latter sweet lady had not only brought a clean towel but had brought a clean mop also, which, being dipped in somewhat purer water than the stream afforded, was soon applied to cleanse the great bulk of the sufferer's person, after which the two ladies, approaching

somewhat nearer, delicately wiped his face, neck, and ears, Mademoiselle Brochet tenderly smoothing down his knarled proboscis, which felt under her hand very much like a ripe fig in the sunshine—so warm, so soft, so smooth was that rubicund organ.

When all this was accomplished Mr. Tripe felt himself again, and springing up with his usual elastic step, he declared his readiness to pursue his way. A few words passed between him and Mademoiselle Brochet, in the course of which that young lady promised to pay him the proposed visit with the *foulards*, at nine o'clock that night; and having seen him fairly into the park, and marked well the path she was to follow, she took her leave with signs of sorrow, and tripped back into the village, while Mr. Tripe wended on his way to the castle, fancying himself quite a fortunate gallant.

His lord, however, was by no means satisfied at the result of his mission. He stormed and stamped, and swore several large oaths; but as Mr. Tripe had a strong hold upon his affections, by the possession of all his most intimate secrets for many years, the peer did not resort, in his case, to either of the two means of correction which he occasionally had recourse to with his other domestics, namely, horse-whipping them heartily, or kicking them from the library out of the front door; and his passion having worked itself off in expletives, he left the renowned Jerry, to seek consolation of the kind best suited to his tastes.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TOM'S GHOST STORY—HOW THOMAS HAMILTON, ESQ. KEPT UP HIS COURAGE—HOW HE CARRIED IT UP STAIRS SPILLING SOME BY THE WAY—HOW HE HAD A STRIKING PROOF OF THE SUBSTANTIALITY OF A SPIRIT.

THE shades of night had fallen over Outrun Castle ; dark and sombre clouds floated in the sky ; the twinkling stars veiled their light ; no pleasant moon lifted her lantern aloft to show the weary wayfarer his way ; the queen of the fairies herself had caught cold, and was sitting at home taking James's powders with a pocket-handkerchief to her nose ; while Oberon was left to play what pranks he pleased all in the dark and nobody to look after him. The especial chamber of Mr. Fitzurse, which since his death had been the scene of so much merriment, was now as gloomy and vacant as if the funeral had actually taken place ; and the peer and Tom Hamilton sat together in the library, cracking jokes and bottles with very little loss of time. Towards half-past eleven, however, the viscount began to be a little fidgety.

"I think, Tom," he said, "that I shall go to bed."

"What! before you've finished the bottle, my lord?" cried Tom Hamilton.

"Oh, we'll soon manage that, Tom," said the peer: "we'll have tumblers. It's odd, by Jingo, about that ghost. It's all nonsense I know, but——"

"Pon my life, my lord," said Tom Hamilton, who had his own particular views of the matter, "I don't know ; I fancy there are few things more clearly proved, which we have not seen with our own eyes, than that ghosts have appeared at different times. Now it does not always require to have seen a thing oneself to believe it. I never saw Mount Etna, for instance ; and yet I have very little doubt that there it is as I see it on the map, stuck on upon one side of Sicily, like the minute dial at the side of a doctor's watch. I don't see why I should doubt the existence of a ghost or its appearance either. How many respectable people have seen them?"

"Pooh, nonsense," cried the peer, "it's all stuff. First, people must show me that there is such a thing as spirit ; and then they must show me that the spirit is like the body ; and then they must show me that Mr. or Mrs. Ghost has some object in coming."

"Oh," replied Tom Hamilton, "I don't suppose they come for nothing. Depend upon it, they have some object when they do come. We always hear that such is the case. They come to punish some great criminal, to discover some murder, to divulge the hiding-place of some treasure, or something of that kind. I recollect hearing a very curious case of apparition, which nobody could make any thing of."

"There was a young lady," continued Tom Hamilton, who had not the

slightest inclination in the world to set the peer's mind at ease, "there was a young lady, the daughter of a gentleman whom I knew very well, who fell, or fancied herself, in love, at an early time of life, with a lieutenant in the navy. Her father was very well to do in the world, and the young lieutenant was not badly off; but it was agreed between all parties that it would be better to defer the marriage till he was a captain. So he went to sea in the *Firefly*, which was wrecked upon the *Goodwin* shortly after, when all hands perished. Amongst the rest who went down was poor Charles Clare, for such was the lieutenant's name. The thing had its nine-days' wonder, and was forgotten; and Martha cried and wore mourning, and refused two or three elderly gentlemen. But at length a very pleasant fellow of the name of Bearcroft, a man of good fortune, and in short, a thorough country gentleman, took a great fancy to her, wooed, won, and married her, some three years after Clare's death. She was now about one-and-twenty; and I recollect her both a very pretty girl and a very sensible woman. But there was always something very strange came over her from time to time. Her eyes would suddenly become fixed on the other side of the room, and for a moment or two she would seem bewildered and absent. One time I was watching her in this state, when her husband took me by the arm and said, 'Come away, Tom. She sees the figure.' As you may suppose, when I had him alone I asked for an explanation. Upon which he told me, that from time to time ever since their marriage she had suddenly seen a figure with its back turned, towards her, which she could not get out of her sight, do what she would—except by one means. It mattered not whether the room was full of company or empty, the figure would come in, and her only plan was to take up a light and walk straight at it. This she used frequently to do when she was alone, as she had not the slightest fear or nervousness about it, which is the most singular part of the whole story. It used always to retreat as she came forward, till it got fixed against the wall; and then as she walked on, it remained quite still, till she was within about a yard of it, when it suddenly disappeared. She never saw its face, at least for many years, but its general appearance was that of a stout man, in a fisherman's jacket, with a glazed hat on. She used to talk with her husband about it frequently; and Bearcroft told me a curious trick that they had played the ghost, but the ghost would have its own way, and beat them. Having asked her to let him know whenever it appeared, she one evening suddenly exclaimed, 'There it is, my love, standing by the edge of the table, on the left-hand side next the door.'

"Bearcroft instantly got up, and by her directions tried to put himself in the place of the ghost. For some time she cried, 'You are before it, you are before it, but it is still there. I can see an arm, a bit of the hat.'

"Bearcroft went on, however, till he was just at the place where she said it stood, when suddenly she gave a little cry of surprise and exclaimed, 'How strange, it has come round before you.'

"This sort of thing went on till they had been married about four

years, and had two children; and never were two people more happy, or more attached to each other. One day, however, at the end of the four years, Bearcroft came back from hunting, and found his wife drowned in tears.

“‘What is the matter, my love?’ he said, ‘what has vexed you?’

“‘I have seen its face, Henry,’ she answered, ‘I have seen its face!’

“‘Well,’ he cried, ‘what like was it?’

“‘It was Charles Clare,’ she replied. ‘Oh, Henry, I promised to wait his return for seven years, they are over to-day, and I am sure he came to reproach me for forgetting my promise, and for loving you,’ she added, casting herself upon her husband’s neck, ‘better than I ever loved him.’”

“Well,” exclaimed the viscount, who had looked over his shoulder twice, “well, what came of it, Tom?”

“Why, the figure never appeared again,” answered Tom Hamilton, but nine or ten months after, poor Mrs. Bearcroft died quite suddenly and unexpectedly.”

“Ring the bell, Tom, there’s a good fellow,” said the peer, “and stir the fire. I’ll have glass of curaçoa, and go to bed.”

Jerry Tripe was some time appearing, but when at length he did come the peer took two glasses of curaçoa instead of one, and apparently very much refreshed, made his worthy butler light him up stairs.

“Take care of yourself, Tom,” he cried, “take care of yourself. There’s lots of good stuff going, so keep up your courage, and if you meet with the ghost, floor him.”

Tom Hamilton smiled, stirred the fire, took another glass of wine, and then gazed into the blaze, listening for the dying away of all sounds in the castle, and muttering to himself, “We will soon see who is this tricky spirit. It is not poor Jane, for in her mood this morning the whole truth would have come out; but I suspect much it is Madame Sally, playing a trick upon her companion and Fitzurse. By Jove, if it is I will have a kiss for my pains. All’s quiet now, I think,” and he listened for a moment or two; but before he rose from his chair, a distant door banged to, and Tom Hamilton sat down again.

He would not take any more wine, for fear of the consequences, and he proceeded to ask himself, “I wonder, after all, if there are such things as ghosts?” He put it in a quiet, calculating, philosophical mood, without the slightest application, at first, to the present case. He had never felt the slightest apprehension of such unsubstantial visitants in his life, but he very soon convinced himself, as he sat by the fire and pondered over the matter, that the arguments which he had used to the viscount, more as a joke than any thing else, were not altogether without foundation.

“After all, there must be ghosts,” he said, “not only from what we have heard, but from what the Bible tells us. It’s a long time since I read my Bible, alas, but I recollect very well the ghost of Samuel appearing to Saul.”

Tom Hamilton looked into the fire and meditated.

"It can only be upon great occasions that they come, however," he continued, after pondering over the matter for a while—"It can only be upon great occasions, and nine cases out of ten are mere humbug. I should like to see a ghost too—Devilish funny it must be. I wonder what the feeling would be? Take a good deal to frighten me, I fancy. Not a bad way of punishing a bad man, after all, for any one whom he has ill-treated, to come back and worry him night after night. I have heard that this rakehelly old lord treated his sister monstrously ill, and some people say, killed her by his bad usage, all because she fell in love with a young cornet of dragoons without a sixpence in his pocket. 'Pon my soul, I shouldn't wonder if it were her ghost after all."

Tom Hamilton paused and listened again. Now, dear reader, there is something in the very act of listening attentively, when all is silence round us, that promotes fear. The nerves which conduct from the tympanum of the ear to the brain become surcharged with nervous fluid: the brain itself, in the neighbourhood of the auricular tubes, is stimulated and excited, a quivering sort of vibration takes place through the whole mass of the sensorium, which, running rapidly along all the great railroads of the human frame, communicate a certain degree of trembling down to the very tips of the toes, but especially about the præcordia and the hypochondriac region. It is quite right that the reader should know how it all goes on; for the natural philosophy part of the thing is quite as good as the moral, and in very close connexion with it.

Tom Hamilton listened attentively and long, as a hare does when she stops in the midst of a fallow. For two minutes and a-half all was silence; but then there was a sudden foot-fall, and Tom actually started. One might have seen him blush through his black whiskers at finding himself growing nervous; so he put forth his hand towards the wine. The five-fingered messenger passed the claret, and the sherry, and the madeira, but laid hold upon the port—a good, substantial, vigorous, courageous juice, which we would advise all readers to apply to when called upon to do battle with a ghost. Tom took a claret-glass full, and laughed at himself.

"These d——n servants," he said, "do just what they like in this house; sit up junketting and carousing long after everybody else is gone to bed, and spend the peer's money right and left. I wonder the house isn't a lying-in hospital. I shouldn't wonder if this whole ghost story were got up by them just to cover their goings on."

The footsteps died away, and Tom began to listen again. Thus passed some minutes more, and then, all being silent, he rose, walked slowly to the door, opened it, and looked out. A lamp that was hung in the passage was blinking sleepily, but there seemed to be nothing else with an eye open in the house. Tom Hamilton looked back, and considered whether he should put the lights out; but he went back and did it, and then took his way with a quiet step along the passage.

Fear is a very odd thing in its way; not at all difficult to be got hold of if one tries hard and resolutely: but the most expeditious and

excellent method of arriving at it is, to be afraid of being afraid. The man who begins to think whether he shall feel fear or not, may be sure that he has got hold of it by the tips of the fingers. Tom Hamilton was in a little bit of a twitter, it must be confessed, but he was not one to give way to any thing of the kind; and, consequently, marching on quietly, he approached the foot of the great staircase. It was a wide, old-fashioned, open contrivance, built upon the principle that we generally avoid in modern houses, of combining magnificence of appearance with convenience, rendering the ascent not too rapid, and giving the climber room to set his foot. First came a long, straight flight of steps, not more than four inches high, with a balustrade as broad as a dining-table on one side, and tall, dark, oak panels, surrounded by carved garlands of flowers, on the other, while on a centre pier between those panels was fixed a bracket, bearing an old helmet, belonging formerly to some distinguished and defunct Fitzurse. The stairs themselves were at the least six feet wide, and the banisters were formed of squat pillars of oak, somewhat perforated by the worm. At the top of the first flight was a landing-place, with the same banisters carried round as a balustrade. The length might be eighteen feet, and then again began another flight, ascending at the same dignified and easy angle as the first. This led up to another landing-place, at the top of which branched off, at right angles with each other, two long and wide passages. That to the left was in itself a splendid room, with four tall windows and broad piers on the one hand, and a long row of family portraits on the other, only interrupted by two richly-carved doors, leading into rooms no longer tenanted.

At the farther end of this picture gallery, opposite to the staircase were two more doors, one leading to a little chapel, or oratory, and the other being that by which Laura had obtained entrance on the preceding night. The second passage we have mentioned led past the room of our pretty little heroine, being in fact, the corridor down which she usually made her voyages of discovery; and the whole of this part of the building was considered by the servants in general as haunted ground. The picture gallery, however, having been pointed out by Mr. Fitzurse as the actual scene of ghostly interference in his private affairs, thither Tom Hamilton bent his steps, and ensconced himself in one of the deep door-cases we have mentioned, ascertaining, in the first instance, that the door was locked.

So far he had been lighted on his way by the faint twinkling of the half-extinguished lamp in the hall below, though, to say truth, (without meaning a pun,) the greater part of his expedition had been a matter of feeling. For a quarter of an hour he waited in solemn silence. He thought it was an hour at least; but during all that time he could catch a faint glimmer from the hall below reflected on the balustrade on the top of the stairs. Suddenly, however, the light became redder, and then as suddenly disappeared, after which came a strong oleaginous odour, not the most agreeable to the nerves of the snout, showing that the lamp, for want of oil, like a minister with a bankrupt exchequer, had voluntarily resigned its office.

Tom Hamilton thought it very unpleasant, and rather unfair of the lamp, and began to entertain doubts as to whether the ghost would appear. Turning his eyes from the direction in which the light had lately shone, he looked to where the windows were, and, though he could very well hear them as they rattled under the rude touch of the burglar-wind, and as the rain pattered against them, yet he could see nothing—no, not even the line of the frame or the lead-work.

Tom Hamilton began to think his expedition somewhat silly. "I never heard," he thought, "of the man who went out to seek for a ghost finding one in my life. It is always those that don't want them who meet with them. How the wind blows and rattles! I've a great mind to go to bed."

Just as the thought crossed his mind, he heard a very beautiful voice—low and plaintive—coming he knew not whence, and seeming to float in the air above him, singing to an air he had never heard before, the following words:—

GHOST'S SONG.

"Stay, stay, why so soon?
Patience wins what hope foretold;
Down the sun and up the moon
Rise fond thoughts from times of old.

"Impatience ruins joy,
Earnest truth will brook delay;
Eager youth breaks life's first toy—
Those who would enjoy, must stay."

"D—n it! this is very odd!" said Tom Hamilton to himself. "What the devil can be the meaning of this? That is neither milk-maid nor dairymaid, housemaid nor housekeeper. Hang it, this is enough to make one nervous! I'll stay and see what comes of it however."

He did stay; and about five minutes more elapsed, while listening with all his ears, and holding his breath as long as he could, he heard only two things—the rattling of the windows and the beating of his own heart: and, if curiosity and a sense of shame had not prevented him, he would certainly have found his way down stairs, and into his own room, as fast as possible. At length he thought he heard another sound, a sort of low moan; but he soon convinced himself that it must have been the sighing of the wind, and he resolved that he would be steady. A moment after, a sudden light broke along the passage, but disappeared so instantaneously that he concluded it must have proceeded from a flash of lightning dimmed by the rain. No thunder, however, followed; and he looked eagerly up and down the dark gallery, saying to himself—

"By Jove, the ghost must be coming at last. 'Pon my life I feel very cold and creepy!"

Next instant there was decidedly a sound, a very ghostly sound indeed. It was tap, tap, tap, as if a soft, and not very substantial, knuckle had

been applied to a door. If it was any signal, there was no answer; and again there was a tap, tap, tap. Tom Hamilton listened with all his ears, and, in about two minutes after, heard a low rustling, shifting noise gently coming along from the top of the staircase. Book-muslin would have made it, but there would have been a difficulty in producing it by any other instrument. It became more and more distinct, approaching nearer and nearer, without any foot-fall that he could distinguish. Tom's heart beat like fury—many a brave man's heart would do so under similar circumstances. The castle clock struck one with its loud, deep, solemn tone, as if to say "Beware!" at that very moment. But Tom had set his life upon a cast, and he would stand the hazard of the die.

"Now or never, Madame Ghost," he thought, as the rustle swept close to him; and, darting forward with outstretched arms, he made a clutch in the direction of the sound.

"By Jove, it's muslin!" exclaimed Tom, who had caught hold of the tail of a gown.

"*Atrappé pardi!*" cried a voice. "I will not be stop, sair!"

And at the same time the chivalrous ghost-hunter received a substantial straightforward blow in the face, which laid him flat upon his back.

At the same moment a bright light shone suddenly through the gallery, and Tom, as he struggled up, saw two female figures instead of one—the first clothed in white muslin, and evidently running away from him as fast as her legs could carry her; the other, pale as the wan moonlight, clothed in the glistening grey satin-gown and black mantilla, which had been described to him, gliding solemnly along at some distance in the other direction.

The light instantly disappeared again, and the voice which he had heard singing, pronounced—"Meddle not, vain fools! meddle not!"

Tom Hamilton trembled from head to foot, and had no power to follow his friend in the muslin, so struck and overawed was he by the other apparition which he had beheld. Creeping down stairs as fast as ever his limbs would carry him, he made his way to the library, where to his joy and satisfaction he found the fire still burning brightly. Having no match or paper at hand, he thrust one of the candles into the fire, and nearly melted one half of the wax before he could light it, so terribly did he shake. Then pouring himself out half a tumbler of port, he drank it off, and took a long deep breath.

"This is folly!" he exclaimed. "This is cowardice! I have a great mind to rouse the whole house!—But yet there can be no doubt of that other figure!—That was no living being! And the voice, too!—I'll go back again with a light! I'll not be intimidated this way by ghost or devil! I'll go back with a light!"

And leaving one of the candles burning on the table, he took the other in his hand, and boldly marched up stairs, looking all the way around him, however, as he went. With rather more haste than was needful he made his way into the gallery, and approached the scene of

his adventure. But nothing was now to be seen. All was quiet and still. On the floor, indeed, lay a piece of muslin, which he had torn out of the gown of his somewhat striking friend, when he fell under the direct application of her gentle hand. But nothing else was there. And taking it up, Tom Hamilton muttered—

“We will identify the jade by this to-morrow. But that other figure! It is very strange! So pale, so care-worn, and yet so very beautiful! I wonder which is her picture?”

And carrying the light along from one portrait to another, he paused at length in surprise and awe before an exquisitely beautiful representation of a young lady, some seventeen or eighteen years of age, in the very dress he had beheld.

“Perhaps, after all,” said Tom Hamilton to himself, “I had better not say any thing about this affair?” And with this prudent resolution he walked down stairs again, and went to bed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CHEVALIER, WORREL, AND MR. LONGMORE, CONSPIRE TO GO TO A BALL—CIVIC FESTIVITIES—THE CHEVALIER DIFFERS WITH TERPSICHOE, AND FORMS HIS OWN OPINION OF DANCING—MR. LONGMORE STANDS UP IN DEFENCE OF THE FANTASTIC TOE—A CIVIC MAGISTRATE'S IDEAS OF RISING IN THE WORLD—AN UNEXPECTED GUEST—MR. FITZURSE FINDS HIMSELF MORE DEAD THAN ALIVE—HE IS NOT TREATED WITH POSTHUMOUS HONOURS—BUT MAKES HIS ESCAPE IN GREAT FEAR OF THE NOMINATIVE CASE, NEUTER GENDER, OF THE RELATIVE PRONOUN—THE CHEVALIER IS INTRODUCED TO ALDERMAN ROTUNDITY, WHO PROVES SOMEWHAT TOO CLASSICAL—HE GIVES INFORMATION AND AN INVITATION!

“LET us go,” cried Worrel.

“LET us go,” cried the chevalier.

“LET us go,” cried Mr. Longmore. “There is no saying where we may find her, or hear of her, or get some clue to where she is.”

“*Andiam, andiam, andiamo,*” they all exclaimed together, as if they were singing in the Marriage of Figaro; and as the reader may very likely inquire where they all showed such an inclination to go to, we will tell him that it was to a great ball at the mansion-house.

Did you ever catch a fish, dear reader, and, thinking him somewhat too small to serve those purposes for which the universal tiger, man, takes the warm life of almost every animated being, except, indeed, his fellow blood-spillers, did you ever gently unhook him and drop him back again into the clear stream? If you have, you have doubtless marked that, after an instant of apparent bewilderment, he darts away with a relieved and joyous whirl, as if all sense of his wound was overwhelmed by the happiness and satisfaction of finding himself in his own element again. Such were much the sensations of Worrel at that moment: he could have skipped, he could have danced, he could have jumped over the chairs, he would have gone to the opera, to a theatre, to a concert *à la Musard*, if such a thing had been then invented. Vauxhall was nothing to his powers of endurance; he could have undergone Sadler's Wells. So he and Mr. Longmore dressed themselves in becoming attire, and accompanied the Chevalier de Lunatico towards the mansion-house, for the grand ball to which Mr. Longmore had some time before received an invitation in the country. The Strand, Temple-bar, Fleet-street, were speedily passed; Ludgate-hill, St. Paul's Churchyard, and Cheapside, were gone through; and at length the Mansion-house was reached, and the three gentlemen ushered in by servants rivalling in lace and embroidery the household of the sovereign. A tremendous noise was the first thing to announce to the chevalier his being actually upon the point of entering an English ball-room. He might have mistaken it indeed for one of the lower stories of the Tower of Babel, just after the confusion, or rather in the midst

of it, had it not been for the twanging of innumerable harps, the scraping of an infinity of fiddles, and all those other instruments which in the hands of ordinary performers produce a noise called, by courtesy, music. He thought all this bad enough ; but when he saw a multitude of men and women shaking their limbs in the most grotesque manner possible to the clatter of the fiddles and harps, and looking perfectly self-satisfied all the time that they panted, and sweated, and struggled as if they were condemned to hard-labour for life, his very natural exclamation was—

“Heaven and earth, I shall never have tickets enough for the half of them ! I must issue a general summons.”

“Nay, nay, my dear chevalier,” said Worrel, who heard a part of this speech, and had remarked that the distribution of the chevalier’s *billets-doux* did not produce the most soothing effect upon those who were destined to receive them—“Nay, nay, my dear chevalier, do not be hasty ; wait till the ball is over, and you will find all these people very sane and composed, I can assure you.”

“What ! not that young lady,” cried the chevalier, “who is grinning in such a diabolical manner at the mop-headed man who is standing beside her ?”

“She is only trying to show her teeth,” said Worrel, “which are fine and white, as you see.”

“Oh, I understand,” said the chevalier, “you buy women in London as you buy horses, by the teeth, do you ? And she is in the market, I suppose.”

“Something like it,” replied Worrel, “I am afraid.”

“Well,” said the chevalier, “I should be afraid of her biting, by her showing her fangs so. But you don’t mean to say that that man is sane who is coming forward now, hopping upon one toe, and lifting up the other foot, as if he were about to kick a foot-ball, or the posterior part of an unpleasant companion ?”

“Quite, I can assure you,” replied Worrel : “he’s a great mathematician.”

“My dear friend,” said Mr. Longmore, interposing, for now that the clouds of grief began to be dispelled, the sun of the worthy gentleman’s good opinion of himself once more shone forth—“My dear friend, be not rash, as Worrel says, in judging of the pleasures and pastimes of others. The sport or recreation of dancing, however absurd it may appear to persons not accustomed to it, is one of the most rational and beneficial in the world. In the first place, it exercises the limbs of persons very frequently condemned to sedentary employments ; it circulates the blood, it teaches the tendons to play easily, the muscles to expand and contract with the greatest rapidity ; it also produces, in two manners, a general and gentle motion of the nervous fluid—in the first place, by softly shaking the sensorium, and in the next place, by bringing the two sexes into a state of mutual attraction—that is to say, where the poles of the two parties are properly electrified.”

“That is what I should much doubt that they ever are,” said the chevalier.

"One must be positive, and the other not negative," said Worrel, laughing.

"How so, how so?" said Mr. Longmore, who had no idea of a joke upon electricity or any other serious subject. "What I mean is, the valier, that it is a great promoter of love."

"A great trial of love, I should think," said the chevalier; "for nothing surely can be more destructive of the tender passion than to see those we love making fools of themselves. But don't suppose that we have no dances in the moon; on the contrary, we dance one half of our existence there. Our minister for foreign affairs always receives an ambassador from friendly powers in what we call a *minuet de la cour*, through the mazes of which they lead each other till they get into the quick step in the end, which is sometimes a gavotte, sometimes an Irish jig, sometimes shuffle-and-cut, and sometimes the Highland fling. But the two last are generally considered vulgar terminations, and were introduced by a minister who had something of the merry-andrew in his nature, and was such a hand at the game of overreaching, that one day, having nothing else to do, he overreached himself. But who is this very stately personage approaching?"

"This is the lord mayor," said Mr. Longmore, "an old friend of mine. I will introduce you, chevalier," and taking his two friends up, he made them known in due form to the chief magistrate of the city.

Poor Worrel passed almost without notice, but the peculiar charm which the chevalier had about him made the great man pay him the most devoted attention, and open his heart to him at once.

"I don't know what country you come from, chevalier," he said, "but one thing is certain—England is the first country in the world, London is the first city of England, and I am the first magistrate of London. I have done it all myself, chevalier—I have done it all myself. When first I came to this here city, I wheeled a barrow."

"It is one of the things I most admire in the constitution of England," said the chevalier, "that whatever be a man's original rank and station in life, he can rise to the very highest offices and position in society, by genius, perseverance, and virtue."

"A word in your ear, my dear chevalier," said the mayor—"that's what we tell the world, but there's a great deal of humbug in them assertions. Genius makes its way once in twenty millions of times; perseverance, after having tried it through a long life, is still a clerk in a merchant's office, and virtue thinks she'll be obliged to go upon the town for bread to eat. No, no; a fortunate spec., a lucky hit, habits of saving, the accumulation of money, a loud tongue, a bold face, and a good deal of talk about honesty and liberality, these are the things that get on in London. Look upon every thing here as a matter of barter, and you may do any thing that you please. Be as ostentatious as ever you like, but never be ostentatious but when it will pay. Be charitable, and subscribe to all sorts of institutions: it's buying in the funds of public opinion, which give better interest than any others that I know of. But never think of giving away half a crown without there's somebody

to see it. As a magistrate, be as rigid and stern, as patient and attentive, as considerate and as careful as you like when the newspaper reporters are in the justice-room; and as a politician, be as liberal as it is possible to be in public speeches and declamations—assert the interests of the many, take up the cause of the oppressed, but grind your workmen and your labourers in private, get a percentage of every man, and if you have once nailed a man to an undertaking or a contract, keep him to it, though it break him and send his wife and children to the work-house. No, no, chevalier, you have not hit it at all. What you mean is, that any man in England can get on who has cunning and knowledge of the world, and may rise from the handles of the barrow to the hand of the baronet. Then all the people who would have kicked him if he had said a word to them in his former station, will be glad to come to a ball like this, and eat his ices and drink his champagne. I flatter myself I've got all the fashionable people in London here to-night."

"They look like it," said the chevalier, "but I think I must go and make acquaintance with some of them;" and so saying he moved away from a gentleman who had sunk himself not a little in his opinion, and returned to Mr. Longmore and Worrel who were waiting for him at some distance.

A few minutes more had elapsed, and the chevalier had just asked who was a handsome, dark, well-dressed girl, who was swimming gracefully through the room on the arm of a fine countish-looking foreigner, whom he expected to hear designated as the Prince of Gazzaladra at the least, and Worrel had just informed him that she was a fashionable French milliner at the west end of the town, and the gentleman her stepfather, when turning his head towards the lord mayor again, he suddenly saw his lordship receive most reverently a person whose features were not at all unknown to him. There, actually there, in the mansion-house, dressed in fashionable evening costume, were the whey-coloured whiskers, the sheep-like eyes, the half-vacant, half-vicious countenance, and the somewhat ungainly form of the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse, with a small black patch in the middle of his forehead! The chevalier instantly pointed him out to Worrel, making a sign not to say any thing to Mr. Longmore, who was at that moment holding an interesting conversation with a young lady beside him.

"I will go and kick him," said Worrel in a low voice.

"No," cried the chevalier, "no, leave him to me, and I will take care that he meets with his deserts. You look after Mr. Longmore, and prevent him from meddling, while I speak a word in the mayor's ear."

Thus saying, he watched the moment when Mr. Fitzurse turned away, and approaching the civic magistrate, with his easy and mellifluous tone he observed—a slight touch of sarcasm curling his nose and elevating his upper lip—

"I thought you said, my lord, that you had all the fashionable people in London here? Pray, do you know well the young person who has just left you?"



LORE

The future is tied with yesterday's love

"The young person, sir?" said the lord mayor. "He is the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse. Do you know him?"

"I have seen the person before," replied the chevalier. "But to my mind he looks very much like one of the water-side clerks of the West India docks."

The lord mayor stared and turned pale, while the chevalier, after a moment's pause, proceeded—

"If your lordship knows him to be what he represents himself to be, all well and good; but——"

"I don't know him absolutely," said the lord mayor, "but I sent a card to the house of his father, who dealt with me when——"

"Oh, then you never saw him," exclaimed the chevalier. "Well, if you will send for the Morning Post of last Wednesday, you will see that the Honourable Henry Augustus Frederick Fitzurse was shot dead in a duel near Outrun Castle, and this person must be——But I leave you to form your own conclusion."

"An impostor!" cried the mayor.

"It's very true," said a gentleman who stood near: "I saw his death in the papers myself."

"And I read an account of the coroner's inquest," added a third.

"An impostor! an impostor! an impostor!" cried they all at once.

"Turn him out!" shouted the mayor. "Ladies and gentlemen, don't be alarmed! There's an impostor in the room; but we'll soon turn him out."

Ten ladies shrieked and one fainted, while five hundred voices repeated, in five hundred different tones, the word "Impostor!"

"Sir, you are an impostor," said the mayor, striding up to Mr. Fitzurse.

"Im-pós-tor!" cried Mr. Fitzurse in his peculiar drawl. "What do you mean by that, you old humbug?"

"An impostor, sir, I mean—an impostor!" cried the mayor. "You are not Mr. Fitzurse—you were killed in a duel five days ago. You are an impostor, sir! Get out! get out, this minute! Servants, turn him out. Send for the officers!"

"Oh, officers!" cried Mr. Fitzurse; "it's time to be off then, I don't like quod. I'll make you pay for this, you old humbug, some day."

"Kick him out!" cried the mayor—"kick him out!"

The servants rushed forward, but Mr. Fitzurse turned towards the door and ran for it. He escaped not, however, what is termed scot-free, for he had a long line to pass through, and every one as he went shouted "Impostor!" and gave him a push. He turned fiercely at one, looked like a crocodile at another, d——d a third, cursed a fourth, and spat in the face of a fifth: upon which he received a glass of pine-apple cream right in his eye, which carried him straight through the door, to the top of the stairs. Down he ran as hard as he could go, while the chevalier and Worrel stood cracking their sides with laughter, and Mr. Longmore turned round and asked what was the matter.

"Nothing, nothing," said the lord mayor, who had by this time come back again close to where the philosopher stood, "only an im-

postor, my dear sir, only an impostor. Some lacky or some shopman who has chosen to take the name and use the card of the son of my friend, Lord Outrun, the Honourable Frederick Augustus Henry Fitzurse. Now we know that it can't be he, for he was shot in a duel I understand."

"To be sure, to be sure," replied Mr. Longmore, "my young cousin Worrel shot him, and I can't help thinking—although I was a little angry at first, because I had a scheme in my head—that it was a very good thing too, for he was a sad loose fellow; and, 'pon my honour, now I think of it coolly, I can't help believing that my poor girl Laura would have had a very unpleasant time of it."

Just at that moment up came a portly gentleman, with a large and globe-shaped stomach, small thighs and legs cased in black breeches and silk stockings, a dangling watch-chain as thick as a cable, a snow-white waistcoat of ample dimensions, and a bright blue coat with resplendent gilt buttons. The top of his head was bald, the rest was powdered, and on his fine, open, jovial countenance appeared smiles of perfect self-satisfaction—smiles which hung peculiarly about the lips, like merry porters round a door by which came in and went out many a pleasant thing.

"Ah, my dear Longmore," he cried, taking both the natural philosopher's hands, "I am delighted to see you. When came you from the country? And above all things, what brings you to such a scene as this—you who are busied in such important works, while we think of nothing but getting money? 'Quærenda pecunia primum, virtus post nummos.' What brings you to a scene, I say, of such gay dissipation as this? 'Cur in theatrum, Cato severe venisti? an ideo tantum veneras ut exires?'"

"Why, I have come looking for my daughter," said Mr. Longmore, "whom I lost when Ivy Hall was burnt down: every body thought she was dead."

"Ay, so I heard, so I heard," replied his friend, "and I wrote a small piece of poetry upon her unfortunate fate—'Dolor ipse disertum fecerat;' but I burnt it this morning, having had a slight intimation of her being still in existence."

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Longmore, pricking up his long ears, and his very pigtail curling with delight. "Worrel, chevalier, do you hear what my friend Mr. Alderman Rotundity says? Allow me, Rotundity, to introduce to you my cousin Worrel, to whom I have promised Laura if ever we find her. My friend, the Chevalier de Lunatico. Chevalier, Mr. Alderman Rotundity, a great English merchant, and, let me add, one of the most classical scholars in the kingdom. He has heard some news of Laura! It may prove a clue, my dear friends, it may prove a clue. Forgive me, my dear Rotundity, for my agitation on this subject."

"Oh, I can feel for you, I can feel for you, my dear Longmore," replied Mr. Rotundity—"Quid dulcius hominum generi a natura datum est quam sui cuique liberi.' But I'll tell you how we will arrange it all—I will give you a clue—I will help you in your search;

but it must be in my own way. You know my country-house is within twelve miles of Outrun—I came up only this morning—and before I set out, while the carriage was at the door, I had a very interesting conversation with a young lady who, as I tell you, gave me a hint that my pretty little friend Laura was still in the land of the living. I go down again to-morrow morning—you must go down with me, or join me there directly. Laura is not in London, but is certainly safe. How she happens to be so, I cannot tell—‘*Causa latet, vis est notissima.*’ Come down to me, I say, and we will soon find her. I must see your two friends with you—I will take no denial. Chevalier, I must positively introduce you to my sister, Miss Rotundity—allow me to say she is one of the cleverest and most scientific women of the present day. I am nothing to her. I merely cultivate the lighter and more graceful branches of knowledge, she plunges into the deep stream. I will take no refusal—I shall expect you at dinner; and in the meanwhile, Mr. Longmore, be prepared soon to find your daughter; but at the same time do not suffer yourself to become too elated—‘*Decet affectus animi neque se nimium erigere, nec subjacere serviliter.*’”

Mr. Longmore promised to come, and Mr. Alderman Rotundity turned to bestow his classicality upon some one else.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CHEVALIER PROVES VERY INVITING—THE BATTLE OF THE CHARIOTS—THE CHEVALIER UNDERVALUES THE LONDON POLICE—HE RISKS HIS REPUTATION—THE STORY OF BETSY TROLLOP.

THE Chevalier de Lunatico did not quit the ball-room at the mansion-house without distributing a considerable number of his polite invitations; for, notwithstanding all that Worrel and Mr. Longmore had been able to say in regard to dancing, he could not help looking upon it as a very lunatic amusement; and when it became farther enriched by any great absurdity, he felt himself fully justified in summoning the performer thereof to his proper sphere.

One excellent gentleman, who had been formed by nature upon the model and in the proportions of a badger, but who kept whirling, and whisking, and pirouetting during the whole night, thinking all the time that he was exciting the admiration of the numerous spectators, while in fact he was convulsing them with laughter, was the first object of the chevalier's attentions. This personage received the billet with a graceful bow and a well-pleased smile, thinking that he owed the invitation entirely to his personal attractions; and the chevalier then passed across to a lady who had been dancing with the most frantic vehemence, and introduced himself in his peculiarly graceful and insinuating manner. She was a married woman of about forty-five years of age, the mother of seven daughters with long, flaxen ringlets. Having arrived at that amplifying age, she had taken advantage of it to the utmost extent—so that, as she skipped and bounded through the dance, one might see the fat wallop and shake, not alone underneath the yellow satin dress with which she had enriched her charms, but also in the colossal beauties which she had exposed, in no niggardly spirit, to the eyes of admiring thousands. Small drops of perspiration lay upon her damask cheek like morning dew upon a peony; and, as she was really a good-humoured soul, she took the chevalier's billet quite in good part, and said she would be very happy of the honour if she was not otherwise engaged. After dealing with several others in the same way, the chevalier ventured to approach a lady with whom he justly feared he might have some sort of trouble. She was the exact reverse of the last motherly figurante we have just spoken of, having past nearly fifty summers in a state of single felicity.

Butchers and such scientific people inform us that, for a certain length of time, the calf feeds upon its sweetbread; and whether this lady had ever, in the course of her terrestrial metempsychosis, occupied a vituline state I cannot tell, but she seemed, certainly, to have very little sweet-

bread left ; and the secretion of the spleen was decidedly more abundant than the pancreatic juice. There is nothing like a scientific description, reader, to make you understand what we mean. However, the process seemed to have gone farther than the sweetbread ; for the flesh appeared to have suffered under the corrosion of the spirit ; so that a proper concatenation of mop-sticks, ornamented with a barber's block at the top, would have made as good a woman, at any time, as the lady in question. Nevertheless, there she was—dressed out in white satin, with a red velvet toque, and a bird-of-paradise feather, several strings of pearls set off to the greatest advantage by the white and yellow skin of her camelopardine neck, and a pair of diamond bracelets hanging loose upon either skinny arm. Notwithstanding the dangers of such a proceeding—and though, as Worrel observed, one might hear her bones rattle as she capered—she was going through all the antics of a dance then in fashion, called the “The Lancers,” and displaying her osteology as if she had been bound, by her office, to illustrate the loves of the triangles. In a momentary pause, the chevalier glided up to her side, paid her some graceful compliments upon her agility at her time of life, and then slipped the summons into her hand, beating his retreat as quickly as possible, both in order to escape the coming storm, and to accompany Worrel and Mr. Longmore who were preparing to depart. The lady gave him a tender leer, and then turned her eyes upon the summons, screamed, called him a brute, sobbed, gasped, and fainted. But the chevalier had performed his office with so much discretion and dexterity that nobody had even perceived he had addressed the lady at all, and he had departed from the ball-room before she had voice or power to say what had offended her.

A number of persons were going away from the mansion-house at this time, and there was such a crush of carriages, whipping of horses, shouting of servants, such a screaming of ladies who were getting pinched in the furious contention of coachmen, and such a cursing of gentlemen who were exhorting, with violent execrations, the said coachmen to behave properly, that it was quite impossible for the chevalier and his companions to find their vehicle.

“A terrible scene, isn't it, chevalier ?” said Mr. Longmore, after they had escaped into Cheapside.

“Yes, indeed,” replied the chevalier ; “we are not quite mad enough in the moon to suffer such things as this. I think we must have some of your police officers up to our sphere to show them how to manage better ; but as I did not come down to summon blockheads, I must leave the matter as it is for the present.”

While he was speaking, one of those unfortunate beings who wander through the streets of the British metropolis—the class in which there is more misery of every kind than perhaps in any other body of human beings—misery of the mind, and of the heart, and of the body, remorse, disease, hunger, disgust of self, enmity with the world, memory's agony, and futurity's despair, extinction of hope here and hereafter, and horror and anguish in the very fire of passion. One of those most miserable and most to be pitied approached the party, and,

selecting the young man as the most liable to temptation, said a word of invitation to him as he went by.

Shrink not, reader, I am not going to write one word or to dwell upon one scene which may call up the blush upon the cheek of innocence, or render this book unfit for the eye of the holiest virtue. But to you I will use the words which the chevalier addressed to his two companions, when he stopped to speak with the poor wretch, and they told him that his curiosity might lead him into danger.

"Fear not, my dear friends," he said—"I have my mission;" and so say I to you, reader, *I have my mission.*

"I will join you, I will join you by-and-by," added the chevalier; and turning round to speak with the woman, he asked her where she lived.

"Come with me and I will show you," she said, affecting that awful tone of blandishment which is more repellant from such meretricious lips than curses and abuse.

"Very well," said the chevalier, and walking on, side by side with her, without the slightest fear of his reputation—which being, indeed, more lunatic than terrestrial, was not very likely to suffer—he passed through numerous alleys and by-streets to a mean, evil-looking house, where he was soon seated, face to face, with the unhappy woman who had brought him thither. A wretched-looking serving-wench of eleven or twelve years of age quitted the room as they entered; and there was a cradle in the corner apparently with an infant in it, for once or twice there was a low, pining cry. The girl who sat before him had once been beautiful; and time, alas! had had no share in spoiling her bloom of loveliness, for twenty summers had certainly not passed over her head; and yet the eye was haggard, the cheek thin and wan, and there was a quivering about the nether lip, as if the rebellious features would fain have refused the harlot's smile they wore.

"And now, my poor girl," said the chevalier, after gazing at her for a moment, "put aside your unhappy trade for the present, and tell me what and who you are, and how you came into this situation. I come not here with any of the purposes you may fancy, and you must tell me the truth whether you like it or not; for even at this instant I see into your heart, and shall know in a moment whether you are deceiving me or not."

"I think you do, indeed," replied the girl, "for I feel an inclination to tell you, which I never thought to have towards any person on earth; and I will speak the whole truth, indeed. But first let me quiet the baby;" and bringing forth the cradle she rocked it with her foot, while she went on—

THE STORY OF BETSY TROLLOP.

"I am the most wretched of human beings, but still I have but very little to tell, for I suppose every one of us is just in the same case. However, my father is an honest, hard-working man—at least he was, poor fellow, for he is not so now—in a pleasant little village a good

many miles from London. His name is Trollop, and he was a shoemaker by trade; and though he was not the first in the place, we were always tolerably well off, because he had the postman's place, which brought him a few shillings a week more. My mother was a daughter of the clerk of the parish, and a very pretty woman she was too; but she would marry my father against her father's consent, and the consequence was, that my grandfather, who was a hard old man, would never have any thing to say to her more, though he was very rich for a man in his way. My mother kept a couple of cows, however, and used to sell the milk and cream; and both father and mother were very fond of me, because I was an only child. Well, my mother fell sick, last March was a twelvemonth, and I had to go out and about with the milk and cream; and one evening I met with a gentleman, the son of a lord in our neighbourhood, who spoke to me and walked along with me, and though I did not like him much at first, and thought that Will Jones, who was the great milkman of the place, was a much pleasanter looking man, yet after a while, like a foolish girl, I began to think that it was a fine thing to be courted by a lord's son, and I was stupid enough to let him know where I went to with the milk, and at what hour I was passing here and there. After that, for three weeks or a month, he was sure to find me out somewhere every day; and he talked so fine and promised so much, that he quite cajoled me. It's no use talking any more about that part of the story; but, as you may guess, I showed myself quite a fool in the end. The only happiness of the whole business is, that my poor mother never knew any thing about it. She died last June, and thought me as virtuous and good as ever, so that she blessed me when she was dying; and though I thought it would have broken my heart to hear her, yet it would have been ten times worse if she had not. Well, not long after that, the gentleman and I both got in a fright for fear the people should see the way I was in, and I should become chargeable to the parish; and so he persuaded me that it would be better for me to go away with him to London, where he said he would keep me like a lady. I agreed to all he asked, for I was frightened out of my life; but, then, when I thought of going away and leaving my poor father, who was fit to go distracted for my mother's death, I felt as if it would have killed me. However, fear and love prevailed, and I agreed to go, and we settled the time when my seducer was to fetch me—just when my father was going round with the letters, which came in there of an evening. But, oh! I shall never forget that evening; for all in a minute, just when I was waiting and looking out, my father came in as white as a sheet and trembling in every limb, for somebody had whispered to him something about it, and he said—

“Betsy, what have you been doing?” so then I began to cry, and he saw how it was very well.

“His face changed all in a minute, his eyes began to roll in his head, and he cursed me terribly; and I thought that he was only dreadfully angry; but all of a sudden he laughed out loud again, and caught up one of the fowls that had followed him into the cottage, and tore it all to

pieces in a moment. Then he threw it down at my feet and cried out — ‘So have you served your father’s heart,’ and then he rushed out again without his hat, and has been raving mad ever since, I hear.

“I scarcely know rightly what happened afterwards or how I got out of the cottage, but I know I was soon going along in a post-chaise towards London with Mr. Fitzurse sitting beside me; and he was kind enough to me for a fortnight, and took lodgings for me, and gave me money to pay for every thing; but at the end of that time I believe his cash began to run low, for I heard him talk about being afraid of having a bailiff after him, and he left me one morning, telling me he would come back at night, but he did not, and never came near me again. At first I was very low, and wrote to him an humble letter at his father’s house, and begged him to help me, and not let me starve or go upon the town, but he wrote me back word that he had no money; that he thought it would be much better for me to seek for another friend, for he could do nothing to help me; and that there was no use of my writing to him any more, for that if my letters fell into his father’s hands he would only have less than he had. His letter did me good, for it made me angry, and before I had read it half an hour I had answered it too. I told him that for myself I cared not, that I despised him; but that his baby he should not abandon, that I would bring it back to him at his father’s door, and that if he did not send me money instantly, that it might not want at its birth, when I could not help it with my work, I would come down on foot and seek help of the parish he was so afraid of. I sent the letter to a poor girl, who had a kind heart, and who I knew would help me so far as to give it to him—though all the rest of the world cast me off—and she did too, for she gave it before his father’s face. As soon as I had sent it, all my courage failed me again, and I gave myself up to despair. I thought he would take no notice, or tell me to do my worst, and what was to come of it then? Was I to go back where people used to be all so kind to me, and to have them turn away from me, and point at me with contempt; to be confined in the parish workhouse, and perhaps to see my father raging in madness—all for my fault? Oh, I shall not forget those three days if I were to live for ever! and how I walked about the two rooms I had, and never slept. To my surprise, however, I had an answer directly, with a ten-pound-note; for he was a sad coward, and my letter frightened him. But he told me I must never expect more, and now that his father knew all he did not care; and the old lord signed the letter, too, and called me a ——. But it does not matter: he called me what I was not then, but what I am now. I saved the ten pounds, and spent not a penny that I could help, eating no more than would keep life and body together, till the child was born; and then I tried to get needlework to do, and sometimes I did earn a few shillings, sometimes nothing; and my money grew less and less, and I sold some of my clothes; and I tried at the shops where they had work; but if I went shabby I was sure to get none, and gradually they would not trust me with any thing unless I could bring some one to answer for me, or could deposit the value of the goods they gave me. My

landlady was kind enough, and sometimes got me work, till I began to owe her rent, and then she said I must pay her or go. One day, then, I went out to seek for work: I had only two shillings in the world, and I had not eaten any thing, for I did not like to change one of them; and my heart was sad enough. I went about for two or three hours, and I looked at the women of the town as I passed along, and they seemed so gay and happy I envied them: but, oh, sir, I did not know what agony of mind and body was hid under many a light laugh. Just then a respectable-looking old lady came up and asked me if I was seeking for a place, and called me a pretty nice-looking girl; and I told her I was looking for needlework. She then said, if I had a mind, she would help me to get more than I could by needlework; and she talked to me in the way of all those old women. And though I would not go to her house and live with her and the rest, I agreed to go home with her then; and I have been ever since what you see."

"And do you think," asked the chevalier, "if you had been able always to get work you would have refrained from your present course?"

"That I would," cried the girl eagerly. "If I could have got enough to buy bread and water I would never have done evil again. I do not mean to say it is the same with all girls, sir, for there is many a one goes upon the town out of vice and wickedness, and many a one out of lightness and folly; but there are thousands who may have done one wrong thing, and repented of it heartily, and would never do another if they had any way at all of living without going from bad to worse. There are places called Magdalen hospitals and such things, but they are very little good compared to what might be done if the ladies and gentlemen who spend so many thousands in very showy charities, would but take the advice of a poor girl like me, who knows what it is that we really want."

"Why, what would you have them do?" demanded the chevalier."

"I would have them establish houses in all quarters of London," replied the girl, "and in all great towns too, where every poor girl who was willing to work with her needle might find employment. Perhaps it would not do to give all those who come, work out of doors, unless they could bring some security that they would take it safe back, for there are thieves every where; but they could have rooms where they might work as long as they liked with the materials given them, and then be paid according to what they had done when they went out and gave their work up. If there were such places in London, sir, it would save one out of every two women who walk the streets of this town at night from a life of shame, and wickedness, and misery, and a death of sin and horror. Hundreds, like myself, would never have gone upon the town if we could have got six or seven shillings a week by our own industry, after we had committed a first fault."

"I will speak of it," said the chevalier—"I will speak of it to one of the most amiable women in the world, and one of the wisest, the wife of Alderman P——, who is himself one of the best of men I hear. I saw them both at the Mansion-house this night; and he will some day be chief magistrate of the city; but even now their character and talents

give both husband and wife great influence, and they will do what can be done I am sure."

"It will be a blessed thing, sir," said the poor girl; "it will be a blessed thing for many; though, as for me, it will come too late. I have nothing before me but despair."

"I am not quite sure of that," replied the chevalier; "better things may turn up for you than that. I know the man who seduced and abandoned you: I know something of the village, and its people too, and I rather think there is better hope for you than you suppose."

"God bless you for giving it, sir," said the woman; "for, oh, if you could tell what horror and disgust is attached to the trade I follow; how one learns to abhor all mankind, ay, and one's self too; if you could tell the scenes that one goes through, the changes from want to plenty, and from plenty to want, the horrible state of never knowing whether one will have a shilling to-morrow to buy food or not, and the finding no consolation or hope but in drink, you would feel that the least little glimpse of relief is a blessing indeed. You don't know, sir, perhaps, that the half of these poor women whom you see, live almost altogether upon spirits. Very little do they eat, and all their mind is to drown care and the thought of their situation. I can't do so, indeed, on account of the baby, but it's the case with most of them; for *they can almost always get somebody to give them a glass of gin, even when they can get no one to give them a bit of bread.*

The chevalier put his hand to his head and mused for a few minutes, and then looking up, said to himself, with his peculiarly moonshiny air, "I think the best way would be, to issue a general summons for the whole kingdom at once! Where such things are suffered to go on the nation must be mad. It's a general act of lunacy.

"I wish I was mad," said the poor girl, overhearing him; "I don't think I should care so much about it."

"Well, well," replied the chevalier, "you keep yourself quiet where you are, my poor girl. I am going down to your native village of Outrun, or very near it, to-morrow, and from what you tell me of your relations there, I am not quite sure that you may not be entitled to some little property. At all events, I will inquire into it and let you know."

"Lord! sir," cried the girl, "you seem to know every thing. How could you find out I came from the village of Outrun? and I'm sure I don't know how it is, but I have told you every thing to-night just as it happened, and I should never think of doing so to any one else."

"My poor girl, you could not help it," replied the chevalier. "But be of good cheer! There is something for you."

We have already said that the chevalier was very abundantly supplied with the coin of this nether earth, which is very plenty in the moon, money being, as Lycurgus found out, a very mad sort of invention, which the world would have been much better without. Putting his hand, therefore, in his breeches-pocket he pulled out as much as he could grasp, and gave her more than any one but a lunatic ever gave a woman of the town before. At the same time he placed in her hand two or three

of the tickets which came out mixed with the money, saying, "Will you have the goodness to distribute a few of these amongst the gentlemen who come to see you. They must be turned of one-and-twenty, and if by any chance they should be married, as I hear is sometimes the case, all the better."

Thus saying he left her amidst a torrent of gratitude and thanks.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE METROPOLIS ABANDONED—ROTUNDITY COURT—SOME NEW GEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES—CLASSICAL TASTES—UNDE DERIVATUR.

THE chevalier found both of his companions up and waiting for him, and before they went to bed he related all that he had heard and seen.

"Oh!" exclaimed Worrel, "I know the poor girl well. There was not a prettier girl in the place than Betsy Trollop, the postman's daughter, till that young scoundrel, Fitzurse, seduced her, and took her away to London. Her father went raving mad, and was so violent that they were obliged to put him in the county jail, there being no lunatic asylum in the neighbourhood, and the good people at the work-house not being able to manage him. She was granddaughter of old Scapulary the sexton, and if he had not married again would have come in for a good thing."

"So I thought, so I thought," replied the chevalier: "but I had a letter from my good friend, Joey Pike, this morning, and he gives me a little hint, which, perhaps, may make a difference in the arrangement of Mr. Scapulary's fortune. However, the moon having gone down, my good friends, I feel somewhat sleepy and tired, so I think it may be as well to go to bed."

The next morning, at a reasonable hour, the three gentlemen having hired a carriage, and put a pair of post-horses to it, set out on their way to the house of Mr. Alderman Rotundity. The road lay straight towards the village of Outrun, and the journey back from London was certainly much more pleasant, both to the chevalier and Harry Worrel, than the journey to the metropolis had been. Pretty little villages, nice hedgerows, small farm-houses, distant spires, small, neat woods, every thing seemed beautiful and cheerful, not so much from the sunshine, which spread over the rural scene, as from the sunshine in their own hearts. After a pleasant drive of four or five hours, and after Mr. Longmore had proposed seven new ways of propelling car-

riages,—one of which was by capillary attraction, and one by an air-pump, which was to be exhausted and re-filled by the rotation of the very wheels it put in motion, the chaise, proceeding in the old-fashioned way, rolled in through a handsome lodge, and along a fine, broad, smooth private road, to the splendid country-house of Mr. Alderman Rotundity. That worthy gentleman was himself ready to receive them, having set off at an earlier hour. Nothing could be finer than the rural residence of the alderman, nor, to say truth, in much better taste, for it combined various sorts of appropriateness. It was a good, substantial English mansion, built by himself, with nothing either Gothic, Elizabethan, Greek, or Palladian about it. It suited his fortune, which was ample, his rank, which was of the middle class, his country, his age, and his habits. There was a large fish-pond within sight of the windows, with a pretty stream meandering through the grounds; there were some fine woods and promising plantations; there were some fountains and grottos, a slight touch of landscape gardening, and some beautiful lawns, which would have done very well for children to play upon; but, alas! Mr. Alderman Rotundity was an old bachelor, living *solus cum sola* with his sister, Miss Serpentina Rotundity. However, he was quite as glad to see his friends as if he had had forty children; perhaps more so indeed, and to the chevalier he was peculiarly civil and attentive, welcoming him to Rotundity Court with that degree of zeal and affection which his character naturally inspired.

“Come, my dear sir; come,” he said, “and I will introduce you to my sister, who, while I visit London upon business or upon pleasure, remains at home, deep in more important employments: ‘*Longum cantu solata laborem arguto conjux percurrit pectine telas.*’”

Thus saying he led his friends up stairs, over carpets soft and pliant to the toe, and through a handsome corridor, lined on each side with glass-cases containing gigantic bones and specimens of minerals and stones.

“This is her own particular abode,” he said; “this is where she studies and plunges deep into all the secrets of nature. You see some of her own collections, all of which she can explain to you in the most wonderful manner. I don’t know any thing about it, I confess, having dedicated myself entirely either to the more material pursuits of commerce, or the softer and more graceful studies of classical literature.”

The chevalier, it must be confessed, was rather awe-struck; for, to the mind of a gentleman of his sphere, the presence of a person so solidly sensible and so profoundly scientific, was, of course, a very grave and serious thing to encounter.

“Really, Mr. Alderman,” he said, “I fear I shall not be any fit society for a person so superior as your sister.”

“Oh, pooh, pooh,” cried Mr. Rotundity, with a benevolent and patronizing air, “you will do very well: one who has seen so much of the world as you have, must have learned, ‘*Cum tristibus severe, cum remissis jucunde, cum senibus graviter, cum juventute comiter vivere.*’”

As he spoke he opened the door, and the chevalier, with some con-

sternation followed, giving a look at his two friends behind. He was surprised, however, to see the good-humoured countenance of Mr. Longmore upon the broad grin, and Harry Worrel very well inclined to laugh.

"Don't be alarmed, my dear chevalier," whispered the natural philosopher, "Rotundity's a very clever fellow, but his sister's a humbug."

Almost as he spoke they entered the room, and Mr. de Lunatico found himself in the presence of the very learned and scientific lady he had heard of. All pre-conceived ideas are wide of the truth. Miss Rotundity had been painted by the chevalier's imagination as a tall, thin, gaunt, dry-boned woman, a sort of personification of comparative anatomy; but here before him sat a little dumpy personage, with a body like a soup-tureen, dressed in green velvet to receive him; a head like a Christmas-pudding, and a turban of gold gauze, looking uncommonly like a *piece montée* of spun sugar."

"My dear chevalier," she exclaimed with great volubility, and in a voice which sounded as if she had stewed prunes in her mouth, "I am delighted to see you. Ah, Longmore, how do you do? Worrel, how are you? Pray be seated, pray be seated. A pretty blow-up you made of it at Ivy Hall, Longmore! Some of those inventions of yours, I am sure, did it. Now my calm pursuits will never set a house on fire."

"Nor the Thames, neither," said Mr. Longmore, laughing good-humouredly."

"Well, well," replied the lady, in the same tone, "we, scientific people, chevalier, always speak disparagingly of each other's pursuits; each man abuses his neighbour's horse, whether it be a hobby or not. But you have been a great traveller, I hear, chevalier; you are a geologist of course. Indeed I know you are; you must be. Were you ever in Russia?—But I know you have. Did you ever visit the *Urinal mountains*?"

The chevalier looked at Mr. Longmore, and then at Harry Worrel, but he was a diplomatist, and replied quite gravely, "No, madam, I never visited any but the Mountains of the Moon."

"Dear me," said the lady, "how I should like to see them. They are in *Chum Tartary*, I believe, are they not?"

"No, madam," replied the chevalier, "rather farther than that."

"I am sorry to hear it," replied the lady, "for if they had been in *Chum Tartary* I dare say I could have got the consul at *Odyssey* to send me some specimens. Homer, I think, is the consul's name, is it not, my dear brother?"

"No, no," cried Mr. Longmore, laughing; "Homer may be considered a *dictator* in literature, my dear lady, but never was a *consul* yet; and though he wrote the *Odyssey* I don't think he was ever at *Odessa*."

Miss Rotundity looked astounded, and her brother gently reproved her, saying, "My dear, you should keep to science, you know nothing about literature!"

"Well, that's true," replied the good-humoured lady; "but you go

along, Rotundity, you have plenty to do ; I'll entertain the chevalier."

"I dare say she will," said Mr. Longmore, as Mr. Rotundity took his departure."

"Now, my dear chevalier," cried the lady, "you shall come and see my magnificent specimens. First, I will show you that which all the Bucklands and the Sedgewick's envy me the possession of. It is a complete *Musty Don* ; I believe it to be quite unique."

"I believe, madam," said Harry Worrel, who could refrain no longer, "that it was found by our army in Spain, was it not ? But I thought they had discovered many *Musty Dons* there."

"Oh, dear, no ! oh, dear no !" cried the lady quite seriously ; "this is the only one that ever was found complete, and some people even say that the top of his tail is wanting. But then, chevalier, I have got the whole leg and hip-bone of a *Maggy Tierum*, which was discovered by our own people in the Gall-stone formation, while they were sinking a shaft by the means of linthotomy, for the purpose of producing an *Arterian well*."

Mr. Longmore's shoulders shook so heartily that his stiff pigtail seemed in danger of being broken off at the root, and he whispered to Worrel—

"It's all that wild dog the curate's doing. He does nothing but quiz her from morning to night, and she believes every word he says. Pray, Miss Rotundity," he continued aloud, "have you seen young Jones lately ?"

"To be sure," replied the lady—"I see him almost every day. He is quite my right-hand man. A very clever man, indeed, chevalier. Mr. Longmore is speaking of the *incubus* of our parish. He has taught me to be a complete *Neptunist*, which, indeed, is the doctrine most consonant to Scripture. I believe that the hills have all submerged from the face of the waters, while the valleys have all recalcitrated by succulent springs."

"Do you not think, madam," said Mr. Longmore, "that escubents may have had something to do with the business ?"

"Perhaps so, perhaps so," replied the lady ; "but one thing is quite clear, that the *Vulcanists* are quite mistaken. *Vulcanic* action cannot account for the *straddification* of all the superincumbent masses ; and if fire is to be the occasion of the whole, how comes it that all the coals in the world were not burnt out long ago. No, no, Neptune for my money."

She spoke so loud and vehemently, that a large, black dog which was lying under the table, got up and wagged his tail.

"Ah, Nep," she cried, patting his head, "I called you after my theory, didn't I ?" But, now, chevalier, just come out into the vestibule and I will show you a collection that is worthy of your seeing, I can assure you. Count Ramcatskin, the famous Russian geologist, staid two hours examining them. He was a very great man, indeed—a wonderful traveller like yourself, chevalier. He had gone up to the highest peak of *Mount Blank*, I can assure you."

"That peak must have been what they call *point blank*, I suppose, madam," said Harry Worrel, with the gravest face imaginable.

"I believe it is," said the lady; "but he had been at the top of the *Riggy*, too. But talking of *Riggy* it puts me in mind of rigging, and that puts me in mind of the interesting story of the *Pick de Middy*."

"Indeed, madam! how is that?" demanded the chevalier, with his usual urbanity.

"I will tell you, I will tell you," replied the lady, moving towards the door; but I won't have you come with us, Longmore, you laugh at every thing but your own foolish inventions. You may come, Worrel, because you are better behaved. But the story of the *Pick de Middy* is very interesting indeed; it was told me by the excellent *incubus* of our parish. One time, in the Pyrenean mountains, which lie between France and Algiers, a British midshipman—sir, you know, of course, what dare-devils they are—was told that it was quite impossible to go up a certain, tall, sharp, precipitous mountain, that nobody had ever done it, and nobody ever could. Upon which he, like a true British tar, declared that it was nothing at all, and that he would not only do it the next day, but would cut a toothpick out of the top of it. Accordingly, the next day he set out in spite of every thing that they could say, taking nothing with him but a hammer and a chisel, a pound of tea, a little sugar, and a bottle of hot water——"

"A little vinegar, too, might have been as well," said the chevalier. "Hannibal once told me it served to humbug his soldiers with."

"Ay, but this midshipman had no humbug about him," replied the lady: "so he set off the next day, and was seen a great way up climbing on and climbing on, till at length the people lost sight of him. But, poor fellow, he never came down again; and a number of his messmates and the sailors of his ship, which was lying off that country, determined to go up with ladders and what not, after he had been absent for four or five days: and there they found him, poor fellow, seated at the top, frozen to death. But he had kept his word: for he had made a toothpick out of a little bush that grew about the top, and had stuck it between two of his fore teeth, just as we see a groom do with a straw. So it was called the *Pick de Middy* ever after in memory of the tragic event."

"Very shocking, indeed," said the chevalier, who by this time had arrived with the lady in front of the glass-cases—"very shocking indeed; but may I ask, my dear madam, what this great animal is in the midst of this blue stuff, looking like a potted crocodile?"

"Ah! that glass-case," continued the lady, with a profound look and an emphatic tone, "contains the great family of the Sawruses. That one comes from Dorsetshire, but they are originally of Irish extraction, as you may know by their name."

"May I inquire," said the chevalier, "what is the peculiarity in their appellation which makes you to suppose them to come from the sister island?"

"Bless me!" cried the lady, "don't you perceive at once. They have all got an O' before their family name, just like the O'Donnels,

and the O'Connells, and the O'Moores, and the O'Tooles. These are called the O'Sawruses. There's the *Pleasy* O'Sawrus and the *Itchy* O'Sawrus, and a great many more besides. It was our worthy incubus who first explained to me the cause of this curious name that they have."

"A very curious name indeed, especially the last," said the chevalier. "I should not like to be in that gentleman's skin at all. But this next case seems to be very curious also. May I ask what this great round thing like a stewed ram's horn in aspic jelly is?"

"That's an ammonite," replied the lady; "that case contains all the *ites*. My brother says I arrange them as Lilly does the Latin nouns, by their terminations. They are the ammonites and the zoophytes, the *aërolites*, the *hivites*, the *neophytes*, and others, all fossils of that family."

She was going on to another case, saying—"now you shall see my leg of the *Maggy Tierum*," but just at that moment a loud, deafening bell, ringing for at least five minutes, announced the hour for dressing; and Harry Worrel exclaimed—

"That shows that we shall soon see a leg of mutton, which is better than any fossil leg in Europe—at least for my present purposes," he added, seeing the lady's brow darken.

Her brother, however, came just then to the rescue, and advancing, with his portly benignity, towards the chevalier, said—

"Come, my dear sir, your curious-looking portmanteau has been carried up to your chamber, and I will show you the way myself; for you will have just time to dress. Longmore, you know your old room," he continued, "and Worrel's is next to yours. This way, chevalier, if you please;" and walking on, with his weighty but quick step, he led the chevalier to a very elegant room with a dressing-room, in which he paused a moment to see that his guest had every thing which was necessary. Mr. de Lunatico, for his part, seized the opportunity of a little conversation with his host, having conceived doubts which he wished to resolve as speedily as possible. He commenced by praising the beauty of the grounds and the house, which he pronounced both tasteful and magnificent.

"Oh, not magnificent, not magnificent, my dear sir," said the alderman, with a well-pleased smile—"though well to do in the world, I grant, I never strive for magnificence. I only seek '*quicquid dignum sapiente bonoque est*?' Indeed, I rather live below my fortune than above it, feeling the advantages of it with moderation—'*ut tu fortunam, sic nos te, Celse, feremus*.' It's not of my fortune I'm proud, chevalier," he continued, the peculiar influence of the commissioner's lunar powers affecting him against his will, and compelling him to tell his feelings whether he would or not. "Though I do like to see every thing neat and nice, and to have it praised and admired, yet I would not be ostentatious for the world, feeling myself a little inclined that way, but knowing very well how foolish it is. But, I confess, of my quotations I am a little vain, as perhaps you may have perceived."

"I have only been astonished," said the chevalier, "that, with all

your commercial affairs and so much important business of other kinds upon your hands, you should have had time to read the immense variety of authors you must have perused."

"I have a very good memory," replied Mr. Rotundity, with a smile, and a shy glance at the door as if he would fain have escaped from the fascination which compelled him to reveal the truth.

"But still you must have read an enormous quantity," continued the chevalier; "is it not so?"

"No, no," replied Alderman Rotundity, with a sigh—"all my quotations are from the heads of the Ramblers and Spectators. There's an English translation below, you know, and I have a good memory."

"Oh!" said the chevalier, "now I understand. But don't be afraid, my dear friend, I will not betray you."

"Pray don't, pray don't," said Mr. Rotundity, and rolled himself out of the room as fast as he could go.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TOM HAMILTON DELIVERS A GHASTLY MESSAGE—HE PROVES HIMSELF A CONNOISSEUR IN SPIRITS—A GHOST-TRAP SET—THE MUSTER OF MAIDENS—A REBELLION IN PETTICOATS.

"Why, Tom, what's the matter?" exclaimed Viscount Outrun, after sitting for nearly five minutes at breakfast the next morning subsequent to the night of the ghost-catching expedition, without hearing Tom Hamilton utter a word; "you are as silent as a stock-fish, and somewhat white about the gills. I'll bet you a pound note to a shilling that you saw the ghost last night."

Thus hard pressed, Tom Hamilton resolved to take his bit of fun out of the ghost likewise; and, as he had certainly suffered somewhat by the apparition, to seek a little compensation at the expense of the good people round him.

"Why yes, my dear lord," he replied, "I did see the ghost, it is true."

"By jingo, that's funny," cried the peer, with an excited look; "what was she like, Tom? Come tell us what she was like."

"She was the exact image of the picture, the third from the east door in the gallery," said Tom Hamilton.

The peer's countenance became a little marbled in hue, but having had time to recover from the first impression of the ghost's authentic

appearance, he resolved to put the best face on the matter, and quiz Tom Hamilton.

"Well now, Tom," he continued, "confess you were in a devilish fright: weren't you now, old boy—felt your stomach queasy? and your knees knock? and a desperate inclination to run, if your legs would have carried you? Hey, Tom, hey?"

"I did feel a little queer certainly," replied Tom Hamilton, with the gravest face in the world, "but I was not at all inclined to run away. I would not for the world have missed hearing what the ghost had to say."

"And what the dence did she say?" exclaimed the peer, with his curiosity a good deal excited, and conscience beginning to fidget on her chair, with not the most easy sensations in the world—"tell us what she did say, Tom, if she said any thing."

"Oh yes," replied Tom Hamilton, "we had a long conversation together; but I am afraid you may not very well like to hear what she did say—it was not particularly pleasant or complimentary."

"Oh then hold your tongue," cried the peer, "I never like to be rowed by man, woman, or spirit.—Here take some broiled chicken; you're off your feed, man;" and the peer helped himself at the same time to a leg, which he cayenned and salted prodigiously, but could not get it down after he had done.

A pause of some four or five minutes ensued, and at length his lordship exclaimed, "Come, Tom, let us hear what she did say; curiosity is a frisky devil, and will have her own way. But your are not joking, are you?"

"No indeed, my lord," replied Tom Hamilton, "the subject is too serious a one to joke upon. But if you want to know what she said, it began with 'Tell that old humbug, my brother——'"

"No, d—n it, Tom, did she say humbug?" exclaimed the peer; "Come, that is not fair; I am not a humbug, whatever I am."

"No, no, my lord," replied Tom Hamilton, "it was not humbug she said. I cannot pretend to give all her words exactly, for I was in a bit of a fright, it's true, but I recollect it was not humbug—it was brute, so it was—'Tell that old brute, my brother,' she said——"

"Ay, that's something like now," cried the peer, "brute she was very likely to call me—indeed she did once or twice, if I recollect right. Well what did she say besides, poor girl?"

"She said, 'Tell that old brute, my brother,'" continued Tom Hamilton, "'that——'"

"I wasn't old in those days, either," cried the peer: "I was as gay a young fellow as ever lived—something of your own kidney, but only a little too fond of the horsewhip. Well, what more did she say—tell that old brute, your brother that——"

To say the truth, Tom Hamilton had not got his story up completely, his hoax upon the peer being somewhat of a sudden thought; and he therefore added at random, "Tell him that he must do justice and make atonement, or I will plague his heart out."

The peer looked perfectly aghast, "The devil she did," he exclaimed, "I say, Tom, that's awkward."

"Very," replied Tom Hamilton.

"Did she say any thing more?" demanded the peer.

"Oh, yes," answered his companion, "she said that he was a very wicked man, her brother, and must do right before he died."

"And what more?" demanded the viscount.

"Nothing," replied Tom Hamilton, "because just then we were interrupted, for you must know that there's a sham ghost as well as a real one in the house, and in the midst of our spiritual *tete a tete* in came a mock ghost—some one who has been frightening your people for a long while, I dare say—but I knew the difference between the real and the false one in a minute, and saw that the latter was merely some one masquerading."

"Who was it, who was it?" cried the viscount: "some of those jades of women, I'll answer for it."

"I dare say it was, viscount," replied Tom Hamilton; "but as I couldn't see her face, I can't say which. I have secured a way of finding her out, however, for I caught hold of her by the gown. Look here! She pulled so hard that she broke away, and left this piece in my hand."

"Ha, ha, ha! That's capital," cried the viscount. "We'll catch her out—we'll have them all in, and make them show their gowns, and then the one that matches the piece is the culprit. What shall we do with her, Tom?—what shall we do with her? Shall we flog her?"

"No, my lord, no," replied Tom Hamilton; "I thought you had had enough of the horsewhip; and besides, the real ghost might not like such a way of punishing her rival."

"Pooh, pooh! that's nonsense now, Tom," said the peer: "by Jingo, I believe you are hoaxing me, and have not seen a real ghost at all."

"On my life and honour, my lord," replied Tom Hamilton, in so serious a tone that it was impossible to doubt he was in earnest, "I saw the real ghost exactly as Jerry Tripe and your son described her, dressed in a black mantilla and a grey satin gown. Her face was more than pale, it was a bluish grey. If it had not been for that she would have been very pretty."

"So she was, so she was, poor thing," said the viscount.

"There was no mistaking her," said Tom Hamilton—"no living person ever had such a look as that. But the other was substantial enough—a great, tall, strapping wench, after no good, I'll swear. Let's have them up, my lord."

"Ay, so we will, so we will," cried the viscount, waking from a deep reverie into which he had fallen. "Ring the bell, Tom, there's a good fellow. But now let me manage it! Don't you say a word. I'll tell you what we'll do when we have found her out—we'll set her in that chair, and we'll make her drink a bottle of champagne, and then we'll paint her a pair of moustachios, and pin upon her back 'The Ghost of Out-run Castle;' and after that we'll walk her through the village with the marrow-bones and cleavers before her. Won't that be a good punishment?"

"Yes, my lord," replied Tom Hamilton, "but more fit for a grenadier than a maid-servant, I should think."

"Well, well, ring the bell, ring the bell," cried the peer. "Let us see who it is, first."

Tom Hamilton accordingly pulled the bell-rope, and the first person who appeared was Jerry Tripe.

"Hark ye now, Jerry," cried his master, "we have an evolution to perform, so mark and do what I tell you, exactly. Send up every maid in the house, from the housekeeper to the kitchen-maid's helper; and as soon as you are sure that they are all in here, take the men and go into the maids' rooms, and fetch down their goods and chattels. Bring all their boxes, and especially any gowns that you can find. Don't say a word to them on your life; but march them all in here, rank and file, without distinction."

"Hadn't you better tell me what's the matter, my lord, and then I'll act accordingly?" said Jerry Tripe, with what authors call *generous confidence*.

But his lord repelled him roughly, exclaiming, "Get out, and do as you are bid, you vagabond, or by jingo, I'll make you. Quick! march! send the girls in, and we'll settle the rest."

Jerry Tripe had nothing for it but to obey, though he paused twice—once, half way between his master's chair and the door, and once at the door itself, thinking it excessively odd that any thing should take place in the house without his being consulted, and feeling a strong inclination to stay and vindicate his vested rights. Finding it difficult, however, to begin, he yielded his purpose, and beat his retreat from the room, just at the moment that his master was about to reiterate his order. Some five or ten minutes elapsed, passed by Tom Hamilton in devouring his breakfast, and by the peer in alternate chucklings at the thought of what he would do to the sham ghost, and reveries concerning the real one. At length, however, a great cackling was heard in the passage; the door was thrown open, and in marched Jerry Tripe, like a stout drum-major, at the head of a regiment of petticoats. Next to him stalked, with stately air, and somewhat indignant look, the housekeeper, dressed in tea-coloured silk, and a white muslin apron. Next rolled in the cook, having her red and stalwart arms bared nearly to the shoulder, and with a fiery glance in her eye which seemed to indicate an inclination to baste her master as heartily as ever she had basted the hissing joint. Then glided forward, with timid step and downcast eyes, Jane, the upper housemaid, then Sally and another sub, then the kitchen-maid, the stillroom maid, till the long line, diminishing through a scullion, ended almost at a point in the person of a diminutive ancilla, known only by the designation of "*the girl*."

Ranging themselves along the side of the breakfast-room, this formidable array faced the viscount and Tom Hamilton as they sat at the breakfast-table, and after gazing over them for a moment with mirth and merriment in his jovial countenance, the peer burst into a loud and uproarious laugh. The housekeeper bridled, the cook breathed flames, Jane blushed up to the eyes, Sally looked brazen, the kitchen-maid

tittered, and a thin diminutive laugh, not bigger than could lie in a snuff-box, but clear and hearty, was heard from *the girl* at the end of the line, like a faint and far-off echo of the viscount's roar.

"Now, wenches," cried his lordship, as soon as he could smother his cachinnation—"now, wenches, which of you is the ghost?"

The housekeeper could bear no more: "I'd have you to know, my lord," she said, "that I am not a wench nor a ghost neither, for that matter, and never will be, please God; but I won't put up with it, that I won't. I'll stay no longer,—I give you warning, my lord,—I'll go at the end of the month. I do declare I've suffered enough in this house to break the heart of any mortal woman, that I have;" and the housekeeper wept.

Sundry other signs of mutiny were beginning to display themselves, and not a little serious was likely to be the result, (for who can say to what lengths female wrath will go, when led by a housekeeper and supported by a cook,) but just at the moment that it was likely to explode from the lips of the latter personage, again the door flew open, and in walked the whole array of men-servants. Bearing the spoils of the maids' rooms both in boxes and out of boxes, each man advanced, and each at the feet of its fair owner laid down the burthen that he carried.

"Now retire, Jerry Tripe," exclaimed the peer, entering into the dramatic spirit of the thing; "let every one in breeches quit the room but myself and Thomas Hamilton, esquire; but keep well the door, and let no one go out without an order."

"Now, wenches, you must know," he cried, as soon as the room was cleared of the lackeys, "now, wenches, you must know that some one has been playing ghost in Outrun castle. She was caught by Tom Hamilton last night, and in her struggle to get away left this piece of her muslin gown in his hand."

"I'm sure it was not I," cried Sally, boldly, "or I'd have scratched his eyes out." But the viscount continued without heeding her, while Tom Hamilton gave her an insinuating look with very little effect.

"Now," cried the peer, "I will know who is the ghost; and who-soever has a gown that this piece of muslin fits will stand convicted of the offence. Give me none of your airs, but obey, or, by jingo, you shall suffer for it. Now, Mrs. Housekeeper, it's clear enough that yours isn't the gown, but you shall go through the same ceremony as the rest for your impudence, so turn round slowly before me."

The peer's face was dark and threatening; the housekeeper, notwithstanding her official powers, was overawed, and though she strove to yield with dignity, still she yielded, sailing round before the peer as if she had been dancing the minuet *de la cour*. The cook founced round, to use an appropriate expression, like a parched pea in a frying-pan. Jane turned round in a great fright about she knew not what. Sally pirouetted with all the sauce in the world, and kitchenmaids, scullions, stillroom maids, and the small girl at the end, all whirled about like that gentleman, famous in song, who is, at all events, first

cousin to Jack Daw.* No one, however, showed the rent gown, or one which, in any way, would match with the trophy of Tom Hamilton."

"By Jingo, this is funny," cried the peer. "And now, Tom, for the boxes."

The onslaught upon the maids' paraphernalia then commenced in serious earnest—if that can be called serious which was accompanied by such peals and shouts of laughter as perhaps never before were heard. Gowns, stockings, petticoats, shoes, aprons, handkerchiefs, shifts, and night-caps, were dragged forth with relentless cruelty by the daring viscount, who held them up, and commented as he proceeded, while his fat sides shook and walloped, and the tears rolled down his cheeks under the irresistible influence of Momus. If the act, however, was indecent in itself, his comments upon it were still more so, and consequently we shall not enter into any of the details, but simply state the great and important result. Yes, reader, great and important was the result. Human nature will bear cruelty, oppression, tyranny, of every kind; the most turbulent and rebellious will lick the spittle of the greatest despot that the world ever saw, and present that part of their person usually employed for the purpose of being kicked with the greatest suavity and satisfaction. *We have seen it in France, we may see it in every country of Europe; but let the tyrant beware how he laughs—you may do any thing with man but laugh at him, or woman either. The spirit of revolt I have shown was rising; and the peer's laughter, in which Tom Hamilton could not refrain from joining—though he avoided all share in his perquisitions—roused indignation step by step, as he went down the line. The housekeeper flounced, tossed up her head, and exclaimed, "Well, I declare!" The cook grinned, and swelled, and clutched her hands spasmodically, as if she was kneading dough. Jane burst into tears; and Sally, when she saw the peer diving deep into the penetralia of her box, caught the red velvet night-cap from his head, threw it in his face, and gave him an awful box on the ear. The flame communicated itself to every one; forward they rushed upon the peer and Tom Hamilton—they pulled them, they pinched them, they cuffed them, they scratched them; they took up the linen, dirty and clean, and showering it upon their devoted heads, half smothered them under the load. Then, all rushing out of the room in a body, they shouted, as if with one voice, "You may laugh now if you like."*

* The writer is generally supposed to have meant some particular person of that age of the name of Raven, (a very common name in some counties of England,) whose deeds are not recorded; others, however, more learnedly suppose that he had a particular allusion, and meant to designate some minister who had frequently changed his party; while a few, and those principally of the vulgar and illiterate, assert that he merely spoke of a character in one of the popular songs of the day, and, in proof of their accuracy, quote the words "Wheel about, and turn about, and jump Jim Crow." They do not, however, satisfy us who this Jim or James Crow was; and we need not point out to the reader, that such a vulgar and silly allusion is not likely to find its way into so serious a work as this.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

A GHOST CAN BE IN A FRIGHT—LAURA BEGINS TO DOUBT THE SAFETY OF HER PROCEEDINGS—DIFFICULTIES UNPROVIDED FOR—A NOCTURNAL VISITANT—MADMOISELLE BROCHET APPEARS, AND PUTS THE SHOE UPON THE RIGHT HORSE—LAURA DREAMS OF MATRIMONY WITHOUT LOVE—MADMOISELLE BROCHET FINDS A LIKENESS FOR HERSELF—LAURA DOES NOT FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF LOVE IN LAUGHING AT LOCKSMITHS—MADMOISELLE BROCHET CONDUCTS HER INTO THE PORCH OF THE TRIFEIAN TEMPLE, AND DISCOVERS AN IMPORTANT LETTER TO WHICH SHE PUTS THE FINISHING STROKE—JERRY TRIPE AWAKES INOPPORTUNELY.

IF Tom Hamilton was frightened at the ghost—and we have boldly acknowledged that he was—the ghost was not much less frightened at Tom Hamilton. Although she had played her part in the affray with courage and decision, Laura's little heart was undoubtedly beating at a much more rapid rate than was agreeable, when she returned to her own room after her adventures in the picture gallery. She had been frustrated, indeed, in her great object, that of meeting again with Jerry Tripe, and eliciting from him any further information regarding the secret to which he had alluded under the first influence of terror. But she had, moreover, found that there were other persons on the watch for her, whom it might be somewhat less easy to deceive in regard to her peculiar state of existence. Fright, dear reader, as thou knowest, if ever thou hast tried, is a sad damper of the enterprising spirit, unless it be carried to that pitch at which—as a learned friend of ours, from one of the English universities, gracefully expressed it—“a feline animal, in the apex of a right angle, assumes the leonine nature.” Laura, consequently, was hurried at once into the rash resolution—for fear is almost always the parent of rashness—of giving up all further peregrinations in Outrun Castle, and abandoning Jerry Tripe's secret to his own care and discretion. She turned the key quickly in the door as soon as she entered her chamber, and leaning against it with a palpitating heart, listened for the steps of the pursuer. No such steps were heard, however; and after taking breath and taking courage for the space of about ten minutes, she set down the lamp on the table, re-lighted her two candles, and began to disencumber herself of her ghostly apparel, wash her face from the paint with which she had daubed it, and emerge from the spiritual representative of the late Honourable Lucy Fitzurse, into pretty little Laura Longmore once more, with eyes as bright, and cheeks well nigh as rosy as ever. Then she drank a little water, and then she thought she would undress and go to bed. Purposes, determinations, and considerations, however, kept her there sitting at the table for some time. Having rashly resolved, as we have said, to give up the pursuit of the secret, and, as the door of the room was

open at her will, to bid good-bye to Outrun Castle, and take herself home, the next question was, when and how she was to perform this intention. When she had first discovered the key in the door, it had all seemed as easy to her as lying, to use Hamlet's compliment to this mendacious world ; or rather, as Laura—bless her little heart—was not at all given to lying, we will say, as easy as speaking the truth ; but now a thousand difficulties appeared. If she attempted to make her escape in the day she was very likely to be stopped and brought back again ; if she executed it at once, the prospect of a night's lodging in the park was not particularly agreeable. How was she to get out of the park ? Where was she to go when she got out ? She had left Ivy Hall in no very pleasant predicament ; and she was very sure that there was neither stick, stock, nor stone of it standing. All this was as inauspicious as it could be ; and she calculated upon tripping along through the country like a *demoiselle errante*, with no very satisfactory feelings. The greatest of all her difficulties, indeed, was how she was to trip along, as we have said ; for though she had found plenty of stockings, there was not a shoe in the box that would fit her, and consequently she would be obliged to follow the example of the hen, and

“ Go barefoot, barefoot.”

Now, as her feet were as delicate little white feet as ever were put into a satin shoe, she did not at all like the idea of trusting them to the tender mercies of a rough road. She had found her shoelessness not very pleasant in her ghostly wanderings over the comfortable carpets of Outrun Castle, though to say the truth, her delicate step upon the soles of her stockings, had not a little contributed to make her pass current as the being of another sphere. To go, however, she was determined ; and she had just brought her mind to think that the best plan would be to make her escape in the grey of the dawn on the following morning, if she could but persuade her eyes to open at a proper hour, when she was suddenly startled and thrown into a state of terrible agitation by hearing a tap at the larger of the two doors which led from the corridor into her chamber. Laura listened, and heard her heart beat against her stays most unconscionably, but for a minute or two she heard nothing else. Then, however, came another tap, and then a voice in a whisper, as if somebody had put his mouth to the key-hole, crying “ Hist, hist ! I want to speak a word to you, a *petit, petit mot*.”

As quick as lightening it passed through Laura's mind, first, that she could not well pretend to be asleep, inasmuch as the light of her candles must be shining through the key-hole ; next, that her late visitor could not be any of the ordinary tenants of Outrun Castle, as the first thing he would have done, under those circumstances, would have been to unlock the door, the key of which was on the outside. Hope, then, of some assistance, rose suddenly up in her heart, and approaching the door, she said, “ Who are you ? what do you want ?”

“ Let me in,” said the voice again, “ I want to give you *du secours*. I am Joey Pike, *alias* Mademoiselle Brochet, yalet de chambre and

master of the robes to the very venerable the Chevalier de Lunatico. I have found out all about it, and wish to deliver you."

Laura glanced round her room, and a blush rose up in her cheeks at the very idea of suffering a man to come into her bedchamber, for she had never received those sweet instructions in modesty which so many of our fair countrywomen now take advantage of in Italy, where male housemaids make the beds and arrange the rooms of the interesting young maidens who travel for the improvement of their morals and their hearts. However, the idea of deliverance overcame all scruples; Joey Pike was too remarkable a person, and too near a neighbour of Ivy Hall not to be well known to the fair Laura, and his tone and language left no doubt of his identity, as soon as it was heard. With a timid hand Laura undrew the bolt, and not choosing to trust the secret of the other entrance to any one, she bade Joey Pike turn the key of the principal door, which he did after feeling for it during a second or two, for Joey was in utter darkness. What was Laura's surprise and consternation, however, when the door opened, and instead of a smart-looking youth in a blue coat and a crimson velvet waistcoat, appeared a smirking, smiling damsel, with long black ringlets, bonnet and cachemere, a muslin gown, and a seigné on her forehead. Laura literally started back, while Joey Pike, resuming in a moment the character of Mademoiselle Brochet, tripped into the room, made a low courtesy, and exclaimed, "I vairy glad to see you. *Enchanté de vous voir!* How you was this many a day, Mees Laura—I hope you well, and you excellent papa, wid hees pigtail?"

Speedily, however, Laura became convinced of the identity of Joey Pike and Mademoiselle Brochet, and giving way to her natural disposition for fun, she laughed most heartily at his transformation.

"You come wid me now," he said, after some farther explanations "You go wid me quite safe trough de park. I very respectable young voman; once you get to de half moon, you be quite safe dere."

"But I have got no shoes," said Laura.

"No shoe, no shoe?" cried Mademoiselle Brochet, "dat vairy bad, vairy bad indeed. You cannot walk or hop eider; but I soon do for you; I go steal you a pair of shoe. Jane's foot is vairy leetle, but if dat not do, de girl's will. Lend me your lamp for one moment, Ma'am-selle Laura," and catching up the lamp, away went Joey Pike in search of spoil.

He was not long gone, and on his re-appearance he brought two pair of shoes with him, one of which answered the purpose, though it did not fit very well. Still Laura had some objection to a night expedition, but Joey Pike now showed her that in two hours, or little more, the sky would be getting grey; and it was finally arranged that Joey should ensconce himself in some part of the house, and come to tap at Laura's door again with the first ray of the morning sun. The pretty little prisoner locked her door and lay down—without taking off her clothes, however; but fatigue almost instantly overcame her, her eyes closed, and she went sound to sleep. Fancy played its usual vagaries, and she instantly set to work to dream all manner of things.

The first vision was, that she was married to the Chevalier de Lunatico, and she did not like it at all; but speedily a change came over the figure of her dream. The chevalier began to alter amazingly; his cheeks plumped out, his grey eyes became browner and more brown; his almost white hair took a darker hue, and curled and waved round his forehead; a considerable whisker extended itself upon each cheek; the look of clear, sharp, moonshiny intelligence melted into an expression of tenderness and love; the chevalier, in short, was metamorphosed into Harry Worrel, and Laura liked it very much indeed. She was just in the midst of her happiness, when some one tapped at the door, and, starting up in haste, she approached and asked who was there?

"*C'est moi, mademoiselle,*" cried Mademoiselle Brochet, "set is your vairy humble sairvant and lady's maid. Time to be gone, I tink."

Laura opened the door without more ado, and, wrapping herself up as well as she could; in the mantilla, she issued forth into the still and silent corridors of Outrun Castle, with a faint, blueish-grey light stealing through the tall windows, and shining peacefully but sadly upon the pictures of the dead.

"Had we not better go this way?" said Laura in a whisper, pointing to the great staircase. "Do you know your way?"

"Every inch of the house from my childhood," cried Joey, forgetting his French extraction for a moment. "The door of the great hall is locked," and on he went along the picture-gallery,

As they passed on, Laura could not refrain from pausing for a moment before the picture of her whose representative she had been, and gazing up with a degree of melancholy interest upon the countenance of one, vague rumours of whose sad fate had reached her ears more than once. The picture was a fine one, and as the light increased each moment, the figure seemed to live before her; the soft brown eyes appeared to look at her with tenderness and affection, and the whole expression, ay, even the features seemed familiar to Laura's memory, as if those of some dear departed friend. Has it not often been so with yourself, reader, when you have gazed upon a well-painted picture, that you have found a sort of reality and identity about it which has made you think that you have known the person? Laura's reverie, however, was interrupted by Joey Pike whispering—

"She was a pretty woman, wasn't she, Miss Laura?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Laura, "very pretty, I think."

"Ah, yes," replied Joey Pike, with a self-satisfied tone, "I was always considered very like her when I was a child."

Laura turned and looked in his face with surprise, but, as she did so, she could not help owning that what he said was true. As he stood there with his bonnet and ringlets there was a considerable likeness—one of those absurd, wild, caricature resemblances which one sometimes sees between very ugly and very beautiful people. She felt mortified to see it, so much had she admired the picture, and yet she felt inclined to laugh; but not wishing to do so, she walked on,

followed by Mademoiselle Brochet. After they had descended the small staircase, wound through one or two passages, and got into the stone-floored part of the house, they found themselves opposite to a door; but, alack-and-a-well-a-day! the door was locked and the key was out. Joey Pike threw himself into an attitude of wonder and consternation, although it must be owned his petticoats were a great impediment to his grace.

"Dat old knave have kep his word," he said, resuming Mademoiselle Brochet. "Begar! he have lock all de door not to let me out, when I would not support his nauseous tenderness. Vat can be done now?"

"Really," replied Laura, "I cannot tell."

"Let me try de oder tree door," cried Mademoiselle Brochet; "den if all be lock, I go into his room and get the key, den ven he vake, I knock him down and shut him in."

There seemed no other resource: all the doors proved to be locked with a vigilance rarely exercised in Outrun Castle, and Joey Pike led the way with a cautious step towards the especial apartments of Jeremy Tripe, Esq. Those apartments consisted of his pantry, which was external—the porch of the temple, in short; and within that again his sleeping apartment—the penetralia where the fat idol lay and snored. The door of the pantry was not locked, and mademoiselle opening it entered with a noiseless step. There was no shutter to the room, and as the pillars of Balbec show the majestic splendours of a former day, so did tumblers and glasses, a brandy bottle, a sugar can, and three circular stains on the table, monument the revels of the preceding night. But there was another interesting object on the board. Close by an inkstand was a sheet of paper, written from the top nearly to the bottom in a tolerably good hand, which Joey Pike immediately recognised as that of the jovial butler, who, apparently, disappointed of the company of his fair Brochet, had drunk and written, and written and drunk again, as long as he was able. At the end of the letter, however, there were two words, one tolerably distinct, but the other utterly effaced, presenting nothing but a large round blur, with a few undecipherable scratches in the middle. It was evident that the head of Jerry Tripe had fallen forward, and his nose had taken the place which his pen had formerly occupied. As soon as Joey Pike beheld it, the irresistible spirit of fun seized him, and taking the quill he dipped it in the ink and wrote by the side of the blur, "Jerry Tripe, his mark."

In doing so, however, his eye fell upon some words in the beginning of the letter, and snatching it up he read the whole of it eagerly. It was to the following effect:—

"MY DEAR CREETUR,

When we were interrupted this morning by that tiresome, good-for-nothing French gal, I was in the middle of talkin' to you about matters of great importance. As to that 'ere marriage certificat which your husband defunck always kepp in his gray breeches' pocket—poor man, I wonder what always made him wear gray breeches—but

as touching that 'ere, I am authoritated by my lord to offer you the matter of a twenty-pound note if you find it and deliver it to me. And now, my dear Scap., I'll tell you something more—you know how I love you, and if you can contrive to bring it up to me within three days, I'll manage so to work the old 'un, that you shall get another ten pound out of him. Don't let nobody know nothing about it you know—but just come up to the castle, and ask for



“JERRY TRIPE,
His mark.”

“There, there!” cried Joey Pike, showing the letter to Laura, “my fortune’s made! But let us take the keys, and I will take the letter. There they hang, behind the door into the old gentleman’s room;” and advancing quietly he reached down the key of the outer door; but while his hand was still raised in the execution of this purpose, a loud noise, as if Jerry Tripe, bed and all, had tumbled down together, was heard from the next room, the door burst open with tremendous violence, almost knocking Joey Pike down behind it, and, to Laura’s horror and astonishment, there stood Jerry himself, in his night-shirt, with his red nose flaming in the brightening twilight, like a large lantern-fly just buzzing forth from its hole in a tree on the approach of a tropical night.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A DINNER-PARTY—THE INCUBUS OF THE PARISH—MR. DEPUTY POPESEYE—THE USE OF SNUFF—PLEASANT CONVERSATION—"MOCK TURTLE"—THE WISDOM OF PLAYING AT CARDS—LUNAR ACCOMMODATION FOR GAMBLERS—A VOICE FROM WITHOUT.

THERE was evidently a party. The cackle of manifold voices struck the ear of the Chevalier de Lunatico, as he approached the door of the drawing-room, and when he entered, he found two or three neighbouring families of the country-gentlemen class, commencing in general at a stout, broad-shouldered, hale-looking, grey-haired papa, and passing down through a respectable matron, and a somewhat gawky young lady, to a shy youth of eighteen, beginning to feel himself the man, and not knowing well how to set about his new vocation. Three persons, however, caught his attention particularly, from various circumstances: the first was a young man who had a clerical air, besides a black coat, a white neckcloth, shoes, and silk stockings; he was of a saturnine complexion, with small gold-rimmed spectacles, and a face which would have been as grave as that of a judge passing sentence, had it not been for a twinkle of indescribable fun in his small dark eager eyes, which peeped through his glasses, marking every thing round about, like rabbits looking out of their burrows; he was speaking in a low tone to Miss Rotundity, and as the chevalier entered, he heard him say "Yes, I can promise it to you for a certainty. It was already packed up at Crocodilopolis, and was only waiting for two ships to carry it over."

"Two ships!" exclaimed the lady.

"Yes, indeed, my dear madam," he continued; "one merchant ship would not be long enough to hold it. The smallest specimen of the fossil crocodile is a hundred and ten feet long, and I am assured this is a very large one."

"Dear me!" cried Miss Rotundity. "Two ships! How will they ever be able to keep them together?"

"Oh, very easily," answered her collocutor: "they will lash the bow sprit of the one to the boom of the other, make the whole fast by graplines, and the very back bone of the crocodile will form an unbreakable link between them."

"We must build a room for it," said Miss Rotundity.

"Oh, I will have over for you the plan of one of the crocodilatories from Crocodilopolis," he rejoined; and was just proceeding to tell her how the whole was to be arranged, by running a gallery of two hundred feet long behind the hot-house and the pinery, when the eye of

Miss Serpentaria fell upon the chevalier, and beckoning him up, she introduced him to Mr. Jones, the *incubus* of the parish.

The next person who attracted his attention, was a person whose superficialities was of no ordinary dimensions. He was a man of more than middle height, but who looked positively short from the width to which he had extended; nor was it alone the *venter Sardanapali* which had received this enormous growth. The arms and the chest were fat, the legs were worthy pillars of the state, and each shoulder bore half a hundred weight of adipose matter; while resting upon them, with scarcely room for a cravat between, was a head in fair proportion, with a broad face, full of jovial enjoyment. It was impossible to look upon that countenance, and not to see that a right merry heart had contributed as much as a right good appetite, to the obesity of of its possessor. He was almost immediately introduced to the chevalier as Mr. Deputy Popes-eye, and bursting forth into a fat, gravy-sounding laugh, as his new acquaintance eyed him with some degree of awe, he rubbed his stout hands together, exclaiming, "Haw, haw, haw! You don't see many such specimens as me, I take it, in your common council, chevalier."

Mr. de Lunatico acknowledged that people were not usually so fat in his country, but as he spoke, his hand was taken by no less a personage than his former host, Mr. Longshanks, who seemed sincerely pleased to see him. The chevalier's first inquiry was for poor Nelly Bain, to which Mr. Longshanks answered in his usual abrupt and hasty tone, "Oh, the old fool goes on pining and weeping from time to time, just as if, in some half-dozen years, she would not meet her son in heaven. He was a good boy, and she is a good woman, and they are sure to meet. What's the use in going about snivelling and gloomy because she doesn't see him for a year or two. They would have been longer parted, in all probability, if he had gone to India! And yet the old ass bears it so patiently and meekly, it's that which provokes me. If she would blubber outright, I could scold, and then I shouldn't care, but the tear never gets farther than the corner of her eye, and one sees that it is in her heart that she weeps."

With that he thrust his hand into one of the large flaps of his waistcoat, drew out a ponderous gold box, extracted from it enough of a black-looking powder to have charged a musket, and crammed the dust up his left nostril.

"May I ask what that stuff is?" said the chevalier. "I have seen a great number of persons stopping their noses with something of the same kind, as if this country was famous for bad smells, and they wanted to keep them out.

"I will tell you what it is, chevalier," said Mr. Longshanks; "it is what we call snuff, the powder of a poisonous weed, which, by this process, is rendered very serviceable to our frailties. I have heard that you think us all mad, but that is a mistake; we are only all foolish. This snuff gives a man something to do when he has nothing; spares many an empty head the trouble of making an answer; gives politicians, hypocrites, and knaves, time to compound a lie, when they have not one ready; furnishes a wise look for a fool's face; enables

men by a grimace to cover an emotion, and prevents people from leading you by the nose, for fear of dirtying their fingers. There's dinner, however; now you'll see some of the antics of English society. Who's to go out first, and who's to go out last, is a matter of as much importance, as if those who got the earliest to the table, ate up all the food before the rest could get at it."

We shall not pause upon the dinner at Rotundity Court, that is to say, upon the things that were on the board. As might be expected from the character of the host, there was every thing that was good, and a terrible onslaught took place during the first course. It was all done in silence, too—profound, voracious, silence: everybody looked at his plate, thought of his plate, or at the utmost, carried his eyes and his imaginings to the neighbouring dishes, except, indeed, Harry Worrel and the chevalier—the one thinking, naturally enough, of his absent love; the other eating delicately, as usual, and then lolling back in his chair, with his hand upon the stalk of a wine-glass full of white hermitage, marking with his keen, clear, grey eye, and moonshiny smile, the faces of the feeders round him. Gradually, however, the edge of appetite was blunted; people began to say a few words to each other, and the ladies were asked to take wine: champagne began to circulate, and with it conversation, till at length a clatter, unmatched since the days of Babel, rose around the devastated board. Everybody was speaking at once; some in an under buz to their next neighbour; some in a loud tone across the table; some in a shout from end to end; and as each was talking of a different subject, the meaning was somewhat confused.

"Whether the *nebula* which I first discovered to the east of Lyra, with my astronomical plunger, as I call my great telescope——," exclaimed Mr. Longmore, talking to a young lady, who had nothing to say in reply.

"The teleosaurus that I was mentioning," said the curate to Miss Rotundity, "used to feed upon the pygopterus, a fossil fish, with fins nineteen yards long——"

"As hard a morsel as ever was chewed——" said Mr. Deputy Popeseye, speaking of a tough haunch of venison which he remembered having eaten three years before.

"And if there was a grand hospital for mischievous idiots," said Mr. Longshanks, speaking to a country magistrate, "I would undertake to fill it with thirty thousand patients from the bench in England and Wales alone, to say nothing of Ireland and Scotland, which would require greater accommodation."

"*Plus aloes quam mellis habet*," said Alderman Rotundity, with a shy look at the chevalier.

"I only danced with him once, I am sure——" said a young lady near to a young gentleman who had a jealous countenance.

"A glass of wine, Rotundity?"

"What shall it be?"

"A little *vol au vent*, if you please."

"Pig-hop-to-us! What a funny name.

"Some soda-water——"

"The alderman's walk——"

"Megalotis——"

"Pyrmont water——"

"Fined him five shillings, and committed him three months in default——"

"Looks very bad indeed——"

"Delightful conversation——"

"It's all smut——"

"*Lætus sum laudari*——"

"Miocene——"

"Oxygen——"

"Catalogue of stars——"

"Notagogus——"

"Member for the borough——"

"Gross bribery and corruption in——"

"The best kitchen that ever was built——"

"Of London clay, and——"

"Hock, if you please——"

Make the best of it you can, reader, Mr. de Lunatico could make nothing. Thus passed an hour or two in the great occupation of eating; an occupation which, alas, in every country, and amongst all nations, whether their glories have been in war or intellect, whether their tastes have been for poetry or the sword, has been from the times immemorial of killing the fatted calf down to the invention of the last new dish, the grand object, apparently, of human existence. Yes, reader, yes; though the world, as a novelist has lately said, is one great battle-field, the object of the strife with us—as with the tiger and the pike—is food. Oh yes, man is a voracious, a most voracious animal, and, with cool, determinate forethought, leaves at least one half of his happiness in the hands of his cook. I wish, my dear chevalier, you could amend all this, for I cannot help thinking there is a touch of lunacy in suffering one's peace of mind to rest upon the frail support of a haunch of venison, or even the back of a rabbit. Let us hear, however, what may be said upon both sides. At that very board, an able defence was made for the pleasures of the table, not quite conclusive, perhaps, but certainly *con amore*.

The table-cloth had been removed, exquisite claret perfumed the air, the ladies had withdrawn, and the gentlemen, full of food, and bursting with hilarity, were talking, laughing, chatting, and drinking, when the voice of Alderman Rotundity rose high above the din, addressing Mr. Deputy Popeseye, who sat near him.

"Nay, my dear friend, nay, I will take no excuse: I understand your delicacy, but I must have it: consider, here is the Chevalier de Lunatico, who has come expressly to mark our manners and our customs: I will have one of your famous songs. Hoarse, my dear friend? Your voice was never clearer."

"Well, well, Rotundity, well, well," answered Mr. Deputy Popeseye, "if you like it, I have no objection. What shall it be?"

“ Oh, ‘Mock Turtle,’ ‘Mock Turtle,’” cried the alderman; “it cannot be better than ‘Mock Turtle.’ Silence for a song, gentlemen, if you please; Mr. Deputy Popeseye for a song. That’s what the toast-master says, chevalier, at our great public dinners.”

The stout citizen hemmed, sipped a little claret, looked round with a jövil and humorous expression, and then thrusting one thumb into each waistcoat pocket, proceeded in a good round tone of voice to sing the following song:—

MOCK TURTLE.

“ When a man has got old,
And his blood has grown cold,
 And his stomach has ta'en an advance,
The bright eyes that shine
Can't seduce from his wine,
 And the feast wins the day of the dance,
 Of the dance—
And the feast wins the day of the dance.

“ A whole book from the bard
Is not worth Bleden's card—
 None but asses can feed upon myrtle;
And our festival nights,
To a lover's delights,
 Are as green fat compared to mock turtle,
 Mock turtle—
 Are as green fat compared to mock turtle.

“ Oh, the calipash see,
And the sweet calipee,
 In them there's no trick nor deceit:
Iced punch is all true,
And the haunch is no shrew—
 There's no jealous suspicion in meat,
 In meat—
 There's no jealous suspicion in meat.

“ Look at yon lover there
With his maiden!—He'd swear
 There's a dove's gentle heart 'neath that kirtle;
But yet he may find,
When the knot is entwined,
 That her kisses were only mock turtle,
 Mock turtle—
 That her kisses were only mock turtle.”

The Chevalier de Lunatico did not look upon either the music or the verses as particularly excellent, but all the rest of the company applauded. He was a diplomatist, and he applauded too. He ventured, however, after a short interval, to ask Mr. Deputy Popeseye, in a low voice, if he believed in the immortality of the soul.

“ To be sure, to be sure,” cried the deputy, “haw, haw, haw! to be sure, if it's a good one, I don't know a better fish.”

"The man's consistent, at all events," thought the chevalier; and turning to Mr. Jones, the curate, he was asking him some questions in regard to the stories with which he filled the head of Miss Rotundity; and as to whether, in a speculative point of view, he thought lying a Christian virtue, when the door of the dining-room opened, and a servant entering, carried a note up to Mr. Longshanks, saying that it was of immediate consequence.

"Ah, some great fool, some great fool," cried the surgeon; "some great fool who has got a pain in the tip of his nose, and thinks it a matter of life and death. Tell them I won't get up for any man. If he is dying, he may die; a good thing for his relations, too, I dare say, and for the legacy duty."

All this was said without even looking at the note, and the servant naturally moved towards the door again; but ere he reached it, the splenetic gentleman exclaimed, "Stay, stay a moment;" and breaking open the epistle, looked at its contents. As he did so, the sour expression of his countenance became chequered with a look of a different kind, and after fidgetting for a moment on his seat, looking at Mr. Longmore, at Harry Worrel, and the chevalier, he beckoned the servant up to him again, saying, "Tell my fool of a groom to bring round the gig—I must go, I suppose."

He then rose and shook hands, saying aloud, "There, Rotundity, don't drink any more wine; you've had quite enough; and if you go on, you'll quote bad Latin, till you confound all the genders, and obscure all the cases. It's a pity for a clever man, and a good man, to make a beast of himself: you don't do it often, but once is too often a great deal. Good night, good night.—Well, what do you want with me, Mr. Deputy?" he continued, speaking to the worthy vocalist who had taken his hand in a friendly manner, "if I were your physician, I'd have you tapped."

"No, no, no," cried the deputy, laughing good humouredly, and laying his hand upon his broad paunch, "there's no fluid there but good wine."

"Oil, oil, oil," cried the surgeon; "oil enough to light your ward for the whole winter. If they knew but how to turn you to account, you'd be as good as a Greenland voyage to them. Chevalier, a word with you;" and he whispered for a moment or two in the ear of the chevalier.

Whatever it was that he communicated, it ended with "Not a word mind, not a word till you hear from me;" and then, looking full into the face of the young curate, he added, in a low tone, "Mind, Jones, what I said about the cards, if you have the head of a reasonable man, the heart of a good one, or the principles of a Christian;" and thus saying, he turned upon his heel abruptly, and left the room.

"May I ask," said the chevalier, speaking to the curate as soon as the buz had somewhat re-established itself—"may I ask what our good friend meant about the cards?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Mr. Jones, endeavouring to affect an indifferent tone, "only he sees that young Handcock is here, who won't

fifty guineas of me the last time I met him. You must know, that when I was at Oxford," he continued, the influence of the chevalier's powers getting the better of him, "I fell in with a card-playing set, and acquired such a taste for it, that I cannot resist the temptation, do what I will. I know it is very wrong, and sometimes I cannot tell where to turn for a bank note to buy the babies clothes, or to pay the bills of the house."

"What! are you a married man?" exclaimed the chevalier; "a married man, and game?"

The curate looked down with a sad and somewhat contrite look, replying, "it is not exactly gaming, you know: I only play at cards, and sometimes take a bet or two, but I am quite resolved not to do that any more. I know it makes my wife very uneasy, and indeed we are sometimes sadly straitened and low, so that I am obliged to come out here and quiz Miss Rotundity, just to keep my spirits up."

"One vice following upon another," said the chevalier, in a meditative tone.

As he thus said, he slipped his hand quietly into his breeches pocket, and took a ticket by the corner, thinking that the reverend gentleman might be the better for a remove; but just at that moment, his companion repeated, "I know it is very wrong, very wrong indeed; I know every thing that can be said about it, and I am determined positively never to touch a card again."

The chevalier suffered the billet to remain; and shortly after, the party rose and proceeded to the drawing-rooms, which were thrown open for all the neighbourhood. It was a very different scene from the ball-room at the Mansion-house, and to the eyes of the chevalier, a much pleasanter one, for he could not yet get himself to believe that the convulsions of St. Vitus, or those produced by the bite of a tarantula, could ever be any thing, when performed voluntarily, but the act of a madman. All here were tolerably quiet, though there was a little of the gay volubility of youth, and a little of the sad garrulity of age; but there were a number of pretty rosy faces, and of bright, happy-looking eyes, which made amends for a good deal of chatter. The chevalier was soon in his element, gliding from one to the other, like moonshine upon the waters, and pleasing every body by his quiet, easy, graceful way of disposing of every subject under discussion. He had enjoyed himself thus for about an hour in the larger drawing-rooms, and had twice seen the Rev. Mr. Jones walking about, and talking quietly with his friends, when he suddenly missed that gentleman; and turning towards the next room, where some card-tables were laid out, he beheld him looking over a game that was going on at one of the tables, with his hands behind his back, and his head bent in an attitude of much attention. The commissioner ventured upon a slight percussive of the breath, to call his attention away from the table, but Mr. Jones was deep in the brief mysteries of *écarté*, and the chevalier, seeing a young lady who evidently wished to tell him all her secrets, glided forward and seated himself in a chair by her side. Mr. de Lunatico's peculiar powers had, of course, their effects in this instance, as

in all others ; and though, according to the general rule of woman, his fair companion looked as cheerful and as gay as possible, her words were all sad ; speaking of disappointed hopes, and ill-requited affection. It was, in fact, to alter a little the words of good Tirso de Molina,

“ En los ojos su mentira
En los labios su verdad.”

After listening, and giving such comfort as he was capable of, the chevalier again turned to look after Mr. Jones, and now saw him seated at the table, with the cards in his hand. Mr. de Lunatico approached, and ensconcing himself in a corner, watched him while he played game after game, betting bet after bet, and saw him lose, by the time the company began to think of the supper-table, the amount of some ten or twelve guineas. He then rose, with a face a little anxious, and eyes somewhat haggard, or—if in such a grave work as this, we may venture to coin a word—we will say, somewhat Laputan, for their sight seemed turned inward, and one might feel sure, from the expression which they bore, that he saw not one single object in the whole room around him. The chevalier proved a “flapper,” by stepping up to him at once ; and the moment he did so, Mr. Jones attempted to laugh cheerfully, saying, in an easy tone, “ Ay, my dear chevalier, you see I could not resist.”

“ I see, I see,” replied the chevalier, “ but allow me, my dear friend, to give you this little note of invitation. In my country, every other mansion is a gambling-house ; where there are two tables in a dwelling, one is always a card-table ; and where there is but one, it serves for that purpose likewise. We have the ace of spades upon most of our dinner-plates, our tea-spoons are formed in the shape of a heart, our knives are all pointed like a diamond, and our walking-sticks have a club at the top. Pray come, pray come, it's the very country for you : you will be boarded and lodged, free of expense ; will have an opportunity of utterly ruining yourself, and begging your family, in a fortnight ; and every inn-keeper has a brace of pistols always ready loaded for his guests, when they can make no further use of their brains, to blow them out.”

The reverend gentleman looked ruefully in the face of Mr. de Lunatico, and then said, “ I shall have to give up my living.”

“ The sooner you give it up the better,” replied the chevalier, and turned towards one of the open windows, at which a group of ladies and gentlemen were standing. It was probably the intention of the chevalier to address to them one of those sweet and courtly speeches which always had so great an effect upon his hearers ; but just as he was about to open his mouth, a loud shrill voice came in at the window from the lawn on the outside, echoing round and round the room, and making every one start.

“ *Ah mon Dieu !*” cried the voice, “ *je suis attrappé ;* I am trapped ; I am caught by one leg through a damn iron thing. *Au secours ! au secours !* Help me ! help me ! or by gar, I break me the *jambe !*”

The chevalier recognised the voice of Mademoiselle Brochet ; Worrel did so likewise ; and both rushed out at once into an open verandah, from which a set of light stone steps led down into the lawns and shrubberies surrounding the house. What they found there, reader, you shall know hereafter, if you have time and patience to accompany the writer a little farther on his way.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WHICH SHOWS HOW THE VISCOUNT WAS SEIZED WITH A PROPENSITY WHICH HE HAD FORSWORN—HOW JERRY TRIPE DISARMED HIS WRATH—THE HORRORS OF A BUTLER'S DREAM—A GHOST TRAP—AND WHAT WAS IN IT.

"By jingo, Tom," cried the viscount, still lying upon the fat stomach whereon he had fallen under the impetuous attack of the female rebels—"this is too bad! isn't it?"

Tom Hamilton raised himself from his knees, and like a water-dog rising from the wave, which shakes itself clear of all the cumbrous moisture before it says any thing to any body, he cast off, with an angry quiver of his limbs, the caps, and handkerchiefs, and stockings, which had been piled upon him, before he replied to the viscount's question. "Too bad, indeed," he then exclaimed, "too bad indeed!" but as his eyes fell upon the viscount, and he beheld him looking like a fat turtle in a basket of dirty clothes, the sight was too ridiculous to be resisted, and Tom Hamilton laughed outright.

"Help me up, Tom, help me up," cried the viscount, feeling an inclination to cachinnate also, and suspecting that he might die of apoplexy if he attempted it with his stomach on the ground. "Ha, ha, ha! it's too bad, though. Ha, ha, ha! You may laugh, but, by jingo, it's too bad! Ha, ha, ha!—I'll flog 'em all!—Ha, ha, ha! Help me up, Tom, or I shall burst."

"Pray don't, my lord," cried Tom Hamilton, "for that would be the consummation of all the absurdities of this morning. To see your lordship lying there amongst the dirty clothes, like an over-ripe red gooseberry, is enough, in all conscience ; but if you were to burst—to crack in the rind, it would be the death of me."

"Help me up—help me up," cried the peer, catching hold of his friend's two hands. "Tom, you are as bad as the rest ; but I'll flog 'em—I'll flog 'em!" and out he rushed after the maids before Tom Hamilton could stop him to remonstrate.

Darting along the passage, he seized a huge hunting-whip that hung over the antlers of a stag in the hall, and catching sight of a petticoat

flying around the balustrade at the top of the staircase, he rushed up and gave chase into the picture-gallery, making his whip crack with all the skill and vigour of a French postillion. The maids, for there were three of them before him, scudded along through a part of the house with which they were but little acquainted, tried this door and that, and at each that they found locked gave a loud scream, and ran on to another. The ruthless viscount pursued, panting, and blowing, and determined upon vengeance: when, lo! his three victims were stopped at the farther door of all, which was usually open, and which had been left so by Joey Pike, but which was now, strange to say, locked on the other side.

"Now I've got them!" cried the peer; "now I've got them. You jades, you shall smart for it, by jingo!"

But at that moment, just as he had reached the often-mentioned picture, the door behind the women opened, and Jerry Tripe, rushing in, fell on both his knees at the viscount's feet, while, with his right hand extended tragically, he pointed to the sweet countenance of his lord's dead sister, exclaiming, "Forbear, my lord, forbear!" and the large point of his nose became of a tenfold deeper red with emotion. "Forbear, my lord," he cried; "did you not vow at her death you would never horsewhip a woman again? and if the ghost is all you want, the ghost you shall have. I've got the ghost shut up in my pantry."

"The devil you have, Jerry!" exclaimed the peer, letting the horse-whip fall from his hand in surprise. "The real ghost or the sham one?"

"The real ghost, my lord," replied Jerry Tripe; "the real ghost, as I'm a living man. Listen, my lord—Ah, Mr. Hamilton, you've just come in time to hear. If you dare face the ghost, you may now do it: I have got her locked up in my pantry, like a rat in a rat-trap."

"Come, let us hear—let us hear, Jerry?" cried the peer. "What the devil shall we do with her? We must send for the parson of the parish, to lay her. Why, Tom, you look pale! Do I look white, Jerry? Sit down, Tom Hamilton, sit down: Jerry Tripe, your knees are shaking; sit down—sit down:" and down the peer cast himself into one of the great arm-chairs between the pictures, prepared for a gossip with Jerry Tripe, which was one of his ordinary enjoyments of a morning; and, to say truth, Jerry Tripe on such occasions often thought, with Mephistophiles—

*"Es ist gar hübsch von einem grossen herrn
So menschlich mit dem Teufel selbst zu sprechen."*

"Well, Jerry, begin—begin!" cried the peer. "By jingo, Tom, that's funny, isn't it?"

"It's nonsense, my lord," replied Tom Hamilton, in a serious tone. "I have told you what I saw, and I'll answer for it no locks nor bolts will keep that ghost in. He may have got the other one very likely, and that will be quite enough for our purpose, for I rather suspect that you would not particularly like to see the real one. I have

had quite enough of it, I can assure you ; and if I guess rightly, Jerry might as little like a conversation with her as any one."

"I declare," said Jerry Tripe, "I've been in such a flutter all the morning ever since, that I have not known what to do. I did not like to tell my lord, for fear of spoiling his breakfast ; and I would not go into the pantry alone for the world. But there she is fast : for after I had run away to the boy's room, and got on my breeches and coat which he had away to brush, and had taken breath and a glass of brandy, I went back and listened at the end of the passage, and I heard her move and rattle the things about, I'll swear."

"Nonsense !" cried Tom Hamilton.

"Well, well ; tell us how it all happened, and what brought her there ?" cried the viscount.

"What brought her there !" exclaimed Jerry Tripe ; "what brought her there ! There was good enough reason for her coming : why I had just written the letter you know of, my lord—the letter you told me to write ; and she came to see what it was all about——"

The peer put his finger upon his nose, and gave a long low whistle—a sort of boatswain's whistle to call up prudence ; and Jerry Tripe continued—

"I'll tell you how it was, my lord. I was lying sound asleep on my back, between three and four o'clock this morning, just when it was growing a sort of grey daylight, and I dreamt a very terrible dream. I dreamt I was drunk——"

"Are you sure it was a dream, Jerry ?" said Tom Hamilton.

But Jerry went on without minding him. "I dreamt I was drunk ;—not very drunk, you know, my lord ; not so as to make one hold on by the floor, nor even to take the strength out of one's knees, nor to hiccup, nor any thing of that kind ; but just comfortable, when a man feels a sort of mistiness about his notions, and thinks himself a very great man indeed, and tells other people what a fine fellow he is. Well, I was in this way, I thought ; and somebody who was there—I don't well know who it was—said to me, 'Jerry, this is poor stuff.' So I dreamt that I said, 'Poor stuff ! why you don't expect it should be my lord's own particular ? However, to finish this night jollily, I will draw you this great black jug, which holds well nigh a gallon, out of the very best pipe in the cellar.' So then I thought I took the jug, and I went into the cellar—the cellar where the wine is in the wood, my lord, and there I saw that somebody had been ticketing all the barrels, and every one was marked in large letters, 'NOT PAID FOR !'"

"By jingo, they may well say that !" cried the peer.

"Every one was so ticketed," continued Jerry Tripe, "but a little quarter cask in the corner of the cellar, and that was marked '*Anno Domini 45*,' and underneath was written, 'The devil to pay, and no pitch hot.'

"Well, my lord, I went to old Carbonell's fruity port, which we haven't tasted this seven years, and drawing the jug full, I thought I might as well taste it ; but I found that would never do, 'twas just as rich and sweet as ever, so, sooner than waste it, I drank the jug off at

two draughts ; and then I went to No. 2, and that tasted as sour as verjuice after the other, and so I drank that jug off, but it cost me three pulls at that ; and then I went to another, and there I did the same, and another, and another, till my stomach began to get woundy heavy, but, somehow, I couldn't leave off, do what I would ; and then I got to the top tier, till I'd tapped three and thirty pipes of port, and drank three and thirty jugs full. By that time I could scarcely waddle, and I'd got to the end of the cellar ; but just then I dreamt I heard the voice of some one calling out, 'Jerry, are you never coming back ? why here's all the wine coming out at the door !' Upon that I looked round, and saw that I had left all the taps running, and the wine by this time was as high as my knees. Then the same person called out again—I don't know who it was—'Why, you old fool, I will shut the door and lock you in,' and I heard him jingle the great keys that were hanging in the lock. So I shouted out again, 'Hang me, if you shall do that ! I shall be drowned—I shall be drowned !' and therewith I made a fierce bolt at the door of the cellar, kicking along I don't know how many empty bottles that were floating on the top of the wine. It was a very terrible dream indeed ; but just then I woke, and found myself rushing out of the bed-room into the pantry, with nothing but my shirt on. My head was in a terrible whiz, and I almost thought myself dreaming still, for there, close beside me, stood the ghost, just as I had seen her before. I was in a terrible fright, and didn't know what to do ; but, however, on the spur of the occasion out I bolted, banged to the door, and turned the key in the lock. I thought I should have died upon the spot, for my heart was beating like a hammer on an anvil. However, there the ghost is, safe ; she can't get out, I'll defy her, for there are bars on all the windows, the door's locked, and I've got the key in my pocket. So now, my lord, you can say any thing to her that you like."

"I say, Tom," cried the peer, "you've heard about catching a Tartar, haven't you ? I think she is more likely to say to me what I *don't* like, than for me to say to her *what* I like. What's to be done now, Tom, eh ?"

"Let us all go in a body," said Tom Hamilton, "if you're afraid to go alone. But you see this must be all nonsense, my lord : if the ghost is there, it is no ghost at all ; and if it is a ghost at all, it isn't there."

"Well then, you shall go first, Tom Hamilton," cried the peer, "if you're so sure of what you're about. Besides, the ghost has no ill will to you ; whereas, I think, Jerry, that you and I might very well get a cuff on the head, all things considered. Call up John and Peter ; and hang me if we shan't be a match for the ghost, any how."

Jerry Tripe did as his lord commanded, and in a few moments a stout array of men servants were drawn up in the picture-gallery. They made a sort of confused line, with the viscount and Tom Hamilton standing in advance ; and as the peer proceeded to address them in what the newspapers call a neat speech, the effect was very much that of a chorus at the Italian opera, for from time to time his assembled followers echoed his words, if not his sentiments.



Le marquis Natanson en marche au des ordres.

M 40 U

"Now, my lads," cried the viscount, "we are going to visit the ghost——"

"The ghost!" cried the chorus, a dioramic effect coming over their countenances, and pallor succeeding rubicundity.

"So every one pluck up a good heart, and march after me like men; for, by jingo, I'll horsewhip every one who is in a funk——"

"In a funk!" sighed the chorus.

"You, Jerry, march at the head——"

"At the head!" exclaimed Jerry, convulsively.

"At the head!—at the head!—at the head!" cried the chorus, each one giving Jerry a push on the shoulder.

"You, John and Peter," proceeded the peer, "follow close."

"Follow close!" exclaimed John and Peter, putting their shoulders together.

"And the grooms bring up the rear," said Lord Outrun.

"Bring up the rear!" sang the chorus; and his lordship, who was not without a considerable portion of courage and resolution too in moments of need, put himself on a line with Tom Hamilton, and led the way, having first recovered his horsewhip, which was a sort of talisman that had protected him all his life, and which he clung to with Arabian devotion.

Proceeding by the smaller door at the end of the picture-gallery, through the corridor, down the stairs, along the passage to the right, round the corner of the china-room, past the wall of the house-keeper's domicile, and along the side of the servants' hall—at which particular spot the irritable nerves of the viscount were cast into a state of agitation, by seeing a bevy of petticoats flying along before him, the maids not at all comprehending why he was marching about the house in procession—the Outrun phalanx turned up the long passage which led to the temple of Jerry Tripe; and with breath growing short, and hearts beginning to palpitate, and limbs in some instances commencing a shake, they saw the door of the fatal chamber before them. Tom Hamilton himself began to feel queer; and as reason has no power whatsoever over human emotions, it was all in vain that he reasoned with himself upon substantiality and unsubstantiality. However, he was not a man to show the white feather upon any occasion, and his voice was as firm as a rock, when he asked, "Where's the key?"

The face of Viscount Outrun by this time was like an old lady's silk gown, purple embroidered on yellow; and Jerry Tripe's nose was like a cloud in the early dawn, a rosy spot amidst a wide expanse of grey. First in one breeches-pocket felt Jerry, then in another, then in the right-hand coat-pocket, then in the left; the key was, of course, in the last place searched—'tis always so, 'twill always be so to the end of time. But no sooner did Tom Hamilton receive the implement of opening, than forward he strode and applied it to the lock. It yielded to his hand, the door gave way, was cast wide open, and they beheld——

The table and the chair, the bottles and the glasses, a mouse scampering off with a bit of cheese, and its long tail behind it; but no other living thing whatsoever. The door from the pantry into the bed-

room was open, and there was Jerry Tripe's bed exposed to view, with one half of the bed-clothes cast upon the floor, as he had left them in his violent exit. The whole of the interior was displayed, but not a trace of any thing spiritual or corporeal, except the brandy-bottle, was to be seen. The peer and his gallant forces approached, but found the citadel abandoned; every hole and corner was searched, but nothing was found. The peer looked at Tom Hamilton, and Tom Hamilton looked at the peer; the grooms gazed at the footmen, and the footmen gazed at the grooms.

But what was Jerry Tripe doing? How was the great Jerry occupied? He was staring, with a look of profound consternation, at the table beside which he had seen the ghost standing; some mighty oppression seemed to hang upon the spirits, some weight that kept down the buoyancy of his fat heart. He seemed stupified, astounded, thunderstruck, and not a word did he say for the full space of two minutes. He was aroused at length by the voice of the peer—"Why, what's the matter, Jerry?" cried Lord Outrun. "What the devil are you staring at?"

"She has got it!" exclaimed Jerry Tripe. "She has got it! That's what she wanted, and she has got it!"

"What?" exclaimed the peer. "What the devil has she got?"

"The letter," said Jerry, in a low and solemn tone, "the letter to widow Scapulary."

The peer looked thunderstruck, and Tom Hamilton mused profoundly.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE AUTHOR DESCANTS, AND SADLY ABUSES THE PATIENCE OF THE READER—HE RETURNS, "A SES PREMIERS AMOURS"—AN UNPLEASANT PREDICAMENT FOR A YOUNG LADY—JOEY PIKE HIMSELF CONFOUNDED—THE MOUSE AND THE LION.

No man is to be entrusted with power, for the nature of man is to abuse it. This is the reason why so much greater a portion of liberty exists under a despotic than under a democratic form of government. Under a democracy all the engines, means, and appliances of tyranny are extended to their utmost limit; and tyranny being an entity which does not lose strength by diffusion, or loses it in a very small degree, the division of power only produces a multiplication of tyrants, while their union in a democratic form of government enables them, at will, to combine their tyrannies on any particular object, so as to render the operation ten times more intense than it ever can be when lodged in the hands of a single individual. You may stare, reader, but it is all very

true I can assure you, and if you want an exemplification of it you have nothing to do but to look to France, where the tyranny of the multitude is even now being exercised—it matters not what devil is at the bottom of it, pride, vanity, or avarice—where the tyranny of the multitude, I say, is being exercised upon kings and statesmen, compelling them to violate the dictates of their own consciences, the strongest moral obligations, and the laws of justice, religion, and honour—for what? For the purpose of frustrating the efforts which men have been making for more than half a century to abolish slavery, and put down the hellish infamy of a traffic in human flesh. Long live democracy and democratic forms, we have now seen the experiment tried in almost every different shape, and we have never seen it produce aught else but a political fever, the hot fit of anarchy, succeeded by the cold fit of apathy, followed generally by a sweat of blood, and the whole, at each fresh paroxysm, destroying the strength of the patient—moral, commercial, political—and tending to the utter dissolution of social life.

Human nature is not to be trusted with power, and the fewer hands you place it in the better, for the fewer tyrants will you create by its use. The only approximation that ever could be made towards good government, in which the people's voice might have a share, would be where the monarch was purely absolute within certain limits, and the law purely absolute and immutable beyond those limits—the law enacted by the whole people once for all—a power in the monarch to punish the people for a violation of the law, and a power in the people to punish the monarch if he infringed it. It is certainly a Utopian dream which can never be realized; but so long as law and government are continually subject to the fiddling alterations of the ignorant, the vain, and the interested—so long as the passions of the people rather than their reason are represented in parliament, and each man's selfishness and folly finds a voice in the state—so long will the government be the mere object of party strife, the good of the people the last object sought for, each measure proposed be carried or frustrated by self-interest, and justice and right, however well distributed between man and man, be totally forgotten where the state is concerned—so long will corruption putrify at the base of the representative system, a man's conscience be sold like the carcase of a sheep, and, as the crowning infamy of all, a seat in the legislature be worth a couple of thousand pounds. Oh, that dark and horrible blot upon English history, that irrefutable libel upon our national honour and virtue, that dark and damning stain upon our name for ever, that no man can hope to be returned by the pure suffrages of his fellow-countrymen without opening his purse or flattering their passions. We are a nation of shopkeepers indeed, when even our consciences are exposed for sale!

No man is to be entrusted with power, for the very fact of possessing it begets an inclination to abuse it; ay, and even the author who has got an unfortunate reader under his clutches, feels the strongest possible disposition to torment him even to the verge of resistance. With all the materials of the Chevalier de Lunatico under our hands, you cannot tell, reader, how we are tempted to take you away bodily and put you upon the treadmill of new scenes and new characters altogether, to rack you with impa-

tience to know what became of Laura and Joey Pike, to leave you in ignorance of what was the call upon Mr. Longshanks, and to keep you in suspense as to the voice from the garden. But no ! on account and in consideration of the dissertation which we have inflicted on you concerning good government, in not one word of which do we expect you to agree, we will be merciful and forgive you the rest, though you are in our power and have never offended us. But the question is, which of the three threads of our story shall we follow ? We are, it is true, like rope-makers, twisting them all into one as busily as possible, but still they are separate at present, and which shall we deal with first ? It ought to be the doctor, I fear—he is the person of most importance ; and yet it is necessary to bring all our characters up to the same point of time, and therefore, notwithstanding his gravity and wisdom, we will leave Mr. Longshanks whipping his beast along the road, and pursue the momentous history of Laura Longmore and Mademoiselle Brochet, as they are nearly six-and-thirty hours behind the rest of the characters.

The reader is well aware, from the account we have given of Jerry Tripe's dream and its results, that the worthy butler, issuing forth in a state of picturesque dishabille, was suddenly struck and astounded by the sight of Laura Longmore standing at the table in his pantry. With the person of the young lady he was not particularly well acquainted, having only seen her once since she was a mere child, which was on the memorable night of the fire. He might, however, have recollected her had he seen her in her own dress, in the full light, and in his full senses. But in the first place Laura was dressed in habiliments that Jerry Tripe could not have supposed her to have procured ; in the next place, the light was dull, and coming in from behind her ; in the third place, Jerry Tripe's brain was in a whirl which left no object round him very distinct ; and lastly, by the impulse of the moment Laura drew the hood of the mantilla completely over her head and face. Jerry neither stopped to clear his eyes, nor asked any questions, neither did he turn his head to the right or the left to look for Joey Pike behind the door ; but out he went like a shot out of a cannon's mouth, and, to speak the truth, the impulse which made him bang to the door was like many another successful movement made by a retreating army, more the effect of fear than strategy.

What was the consternation of Laura, however, when she saw the door shut, and heard the key turn. It was a terrible moment ; all sorts of apprehensions and anxieties attacked her at once, all possibility of escape seemed at an end, the rest of the servants would be soon roused, the peer himself would soon be informed of the fact, she would be caught locked up in the butler's pantry with a man dressed up as a woman—she felt keenly what a story might be made out against her, and a strong inclination to cry bitterly came upon her. Joey Pike himself was a little disconcerted. For once—for the only time in his life he felt like a fish out of water—but the weakness passed away in an instant. The conscious resources of genius, the power of triumphing over fate and circumstances, the sight of Laura's tears, the spirit of chivalry, the moral dignity of high and virtuous purposes, soon restored him to his self-possession—and Joey was himself again !

"Do not fear, Miss Laura," he exclaimed; "*soyez tranquille*, we will find some means of escape; ay, and even should the viscount, the Bear of Outrun Castle as the people call him, present himself before we can *fugir*, I will confront him—I will tell a *petit mot*. But what should prevent us," he continued, stretching out his left arm to the full towards the window, and bringing his right across his breast so as to point in the same direction—"but what should prevent us from taking advantage of the *fenaitre*? We are upon the *ray de chaussée*."

"But the bars, the bars!" said Laura, in a despairing tone.

"Ha, the bars!" cried Joey Pike; "*nous sommes grillés*. But let us see, perhaps we can remove the bars:" and mounting upon the table, Joey threw open the window and tried the iron grating which defended the sanctuary of Jerry Tripe. He gave it a good hearty shake, he pulled, he pushed, but he pulled and pushed in vain. Not the slightest impression was made upon the stubborn metal, although to encourage himself in the deed he sang, *sotto voce*, as he called it, "Locks, bolts, and bars, fly asunder." Nothing flew asunder at all, and Joey Pike descended to try another of his never-ending resources; but a man of genius unfortunately often finds himself cramped for want of means, and such was the case with Joey Pike. He tried the other window in the bed-room—it was as firm as the first; he examined the door—the lock resisted all his efforts. For an hour he devised schemes and abandoned them, and Laura sat her down in a state of deep dejection, her only support under which was indignation at being placed in such a situation in consequence of her unjust detention in Outrun Castle.

"I will tell you what," exclaimed Joey at length, "when he comes back I will frighten both him and his lord. I will expose this letter to their eyes, I will claim my just rights, and see what they will have to *repondre*."

Laura sighed, but made no answer; and as the sweet breath of spring came through the window which Joey Pike had left open, she longed more and more for her liberty. At length, however, she said in a low voice—

"Hark!" there is some one talking."

Joey instantly bounded upon the table like an antelope, and looked out of the window, which, we should have explained to the reader, was a high one. A moment after he descended, waving his hand gracefully, and saying—

"*Deux femmes de chambre!*"

"Let me see, let me see," exclaimed Laura, turning a wistful eye from the window to the table, and not exactly liking to rise into such an elevated position. Joey Pike, however, saw her difficulty in a moment, and seizing the table with one hand—he would not have touched it with two for the world, for it would have put him in an ungraceful attitude—he drew it back from the window, and clasping the back of a chair with his sinister digits, he pushed it forward into such a position that Laura could mount and look out without showing her ankles.

"I think," said our pretty little friend as she ascended, "that if either of the maids who wait upon me is there, she will let me out."

"*Secoora ! secoora !*" said Joey Pike, "*non e possibly resistar.*"

At the moment that Laura put her face to the grating, the poor girl Jane—who was a very good girl upon the whole, notwithstanding a few peccadilloes, as weak as water it is true, but all made of emotions, tendernesses, and affections, and possessing enough of such commodities to have supplied a great portion of the peerage, where, as the reader well knows, there is some lack of them—The poor girl Jane, I say, after having enjoyed a gossip of three minutes and three-quarters with her friend Sally, who had just called her a fool for something she had said, and walked away—The poor girl Jane—I shall never get to the end of the sentence, I do believe; you do not know, dear reader, how difficult it is to finish a period when a thousand little adjuncts and parenthetical appendices will come poking their snug snouts in, deranging all your figures of rhetoric, like pigs grubbing up a flower-garden—The poor girl Jane, I say, for the fifth time—and now I am determined to go on, and not suffer myself to be seduced away continually from the main subject—The poor girl Jane, then, having finished her gossip with Sally, was walking along within a yard of the spot where Laura stood.

"Jane, Jane," cried Laura.

The upper housemaid started, and had well nigh shrieked aloud, for her nerves were in such a state of excitement that the slightest unexpected sound seemed like the voice of her great grandmother calling to her out of the grave. When she turned round, however, and saw Laura's face, which the reader must remember had been washed of the blue and white paint, with the hood now thrown back so as to expose her whole head with its rich brown tresses, she contented herself with exclaiming—

"Good gracious me!"

"Come closer, come closer," said Laura in an under-voice; and Jane approached, observing—

"Lord, miss, who would have thought to see you in Jerry Tripe's pantry?"

"He has locked me in," said Laura, "he has locked me in while I was trying to make my escape. Pray do let me out, and I will go back again to my own room indeed."

Jane paused and gazed in her face with a bewildered look; but suddenly a glance of intelligence, ay, and of satisfaction, came up in the poor girl's countenance, and she exclaimed—

"Trying to make your escape? Go back again to your room? Then you don't want to stay here and marry Mr. Fitzurse?"

"Marry Mr. Fitzurse?" cried Laura. "Why I abhor him."

Jane tossed her head with a little look of indignation, for her feelings upon the subject were very different from Laura's; but the young lady continued in the same tone—

"Stay here? I would give five hundred pounds to get away!"

"Stop, stop," said Jane, "I will let you out. We must make haste, we must make haste—I saw the old sot's face a minute ago up at the window of the lad's room shaving himself. I'll go round and let you out."

But, alas, when Jane came and put her hand upon the lock, the key was not in it! A momentary pause of bewilderment and uncertainty

took place. Nobody said a word either on the one side of the door or the other. But at length Jane put her mouth to the key-hole and whispered—

“Stay a minute, the boy’s got his coat to brush in the knife-house, perhaps the key’s in that;” and away she ran as hard as she could go.

Composing her face before she entered the knife-house, and with her wits all quickened by the influence of various passions, Jane walked quietly in, and found the lad of sixteen who did every thing for every body in the house, carefully brushing the best small-clothes of Jerry Tripe, and whistling as happily as if he had nothing to do in the world.

“I say, Jack,” cried Jane, “I wish you’d go and get me a pitcher of water from the park well, there’s a good soul.”

“That I will, Miss Jane,” replied the boy, who had a great respect for prettiness, and wished he was a butler for Jane’s sake. “Just let me brush these out, and take them up to Mr. Tripe, and I will go for it in a minute.”

“Oh, he doesn’t want them directly,” answered Jane; “you know he’s always an hour shaving, for fear of cutting off the warts upon his face.”

“He’s up in my room shaving to-day,” said the boy, looking in Jane’s pretty face with tender admiration.

“Well, well,” cried Jane, “run, there’s a good fellow, and I’ll brush the coat for you in the meanwhile.”

“You can send up the girl with them when they’re ready,” said the lad, “and then he won’t grumble.”

Away went Jack as soon as he had uttered these words, and the moment his back was turned, in went Jane’s hand into the two pockets of Mr. Tripe’s coat, one after the other. No key was there. One chance remained—there lay the small-clothes. Jane touched them with reverence, and had just ascertained that there was something heavy in the right-hand pocket, when she heard a step. Casting down the small-clothes, she seized the brush and began upon the coat as if she would have torn it all to pieces.

“Where’s the pitcher, Jane?” said the boy putting in his head.

“In my closet, Jack, in my closet,” replied Jane, brushing away with great trepidation; “you know, my lord always will have the park-well water, and the herd has forgotten to bring it this morning.”

“I’ll fetch it, I’ll fetch it,” replied Jack; and the next minute Jane heard him whistling along across the court to the place of his destination.

That instant she grasped the breeches, she felt in the pocket, she produced the key, and with an hysterical laugh of joy and satisfaction she darted away to the pantry, unlocked the door, and cried—

“Come out, miss, come out, be quick.”

When her eyes fell upon Mademoiselle Brochet, however, for an instant poor Jane was like to drop. Laura, without being at all aware that there was any skilfulness in the manœuvre, had entered into no long explanations in her conversation with the maid from the window, in regard to her having a companion in imprisonment, and Jane looked almost as reproachfully at her as if she had taken her in. But the captive set free paid little attention to her deliverer’s looks, exclaiming—

"Now, now, which way can we escape?"

"Good gracious!" cried Jane, "what's to be done? I thought there was only you, miss, and now there's two instead of one. Escape? Why you'll be caught to a certainty if you attempt to escape just now. The people are getting all about the place. What's to be done I wonder? Well, well, I must lock the door and put the key back at all events, or we shall all be found out. Run you into the housekeeper's room, and lock yourselves in. She won't be down for an hour, and I'll come back directly. It is just up the passage, and then——"

"I know the way, I know the way," cried Joey Pike. "*Sweevey moi, Ma'amselle Laure. Sweevey moi, sweevey moi.*"

Jane closed the door as soon as they were gone, rushed back to the knife-house, placed the key in one of Jerry Tripe's pockets, only mistaking the coat for the breeches, sent the clothes up to their owner by "*the girl*;" and then gently insinuated her thumb between her front teeth and gave it a contemplative bite. Jane fancied that she was devising a plan for Laura's escape; but she made a mistake, as her first words will show.

"How did she come to know the way to the housekeeper's room so well?" said Jane. "I should not wonder if this was another of his ladies:" and away she went, with strong misgivings as to the reputation of Mademoiselle Brochet, and to some connexion between her and Mr. Fitzurse.

Two light taps and a whisper at the door of the housekeeper's room gained her admission, and Jane went to work more scientifically than might have been expected. Addressing herself at once to Laura, she said, "I am very willing to do all I can to help you, ma'am; but I can't let this young person go, for I don't know who she is."

Laura looked at Joey Pike with all the merry spirit that lit her eyes in days of old shining up in them again. "I see you have doubts, Jane," she said; "but I can assure you she is not a bad young woman at all."

"Well, I can't let her go, Miss Longmore," replied Jane; "and I won't."

"You won't, *mon cher* Jane?" cried Mademoiselle Brochet, sailing up to her; "Oh, yes, you will. You be very good-natured creature, I is quite sure. You will let me go—dat's a good girl."

"Keep your distance, ma'am, if you please," cried Jane. "I won't, that's positive; and if you attempt to go, I'll scream, and then it's all up with you."

"Oh, yes you will!" cried Mademoiselle Brochet: "let me give you one leetle pretty kiss off the cheek."

"Why, goodness gracious!" cried Jane; "my stars!—If I don't believe—Yes, it is!—It's Joey Pike!"

"Ay, you sweet creature now," cried Joey, "you would not betray your humble adorer and fellow townsman—you would not *denoncer* me?"

"No, that I wouldn't, Joey," replied Jane: "I'm sure you're as innocent as a new-born babe."

"Not quite, Janey," replied Joey Pike; "but not quite a *rouey*

either : and as for this matter of old Scapulary, I would not have hurt a hair of the old man's head—no, not for a kingdom."

"I don't think you would," said Jane from the bottom of her heart, "for you were always as good-natured a soul as ever lived. So you may go when you like ; now I know who you are, I don't care."

"I dare say you don't," said Joey Pike, with a shrewd wink of the eye, which made the colour come up into Jane's face ; "but Miss Laura must go with me."

"She'll be stopped to a certainty, if she attempts it," replied Jane. "It will be a great deal better for her to stay here one day more, and get away just after dusk to-night. I will contrive to bring her out of the house, and part of the way across the park, by the village path, if you will meet us, Joey."

"I will do my impossible," answered Joey Pike ; "and I think it will be the best plan too. As for me, *je m'en vais* ; and if I meet Jerry himself, he dare not stop me *pour tout le monde*. Mademoiselle Laure, *baso los manos a usted*. Janey, I salute you ; but mind you keep your word, for if you don't we'll raise the country, and attack the house."

Thus saying, Joey Pike departed ; and Laura, after a short conference with her new friend, was guided back by the most silent and secret ways to her former chamber.

Thus do all the miracles of ordinary life disappear, when they come to be investigated ; and thus do a number of wiseacres attempt to explain away the miracles recorded in Scripture, though they are only told us because they were miracles, and because the end and object to be obtained justified to the full the interposition of the Almighty power in order to reverse the ordinary course of nature, and stamp certain facts with Divine authority by displaying in them the hand of God himself.

CHAPTER XL.

A COOK'S REVENGE—THE EVILS OF SUSPICION—AN EMPTY NEST AND A FLOWN BIRD.

"I'LL sarve him out," cried the cook, "I'll sarve him out !"

And so she did * * * * *

"I say, Tom," cried the peer, as they sat at luncheon, after having eaten a very comfortable meal, "I think we must bury him to-morrow ; it don't do to have a ghost and a corpse in the house at the same time : besides, he must stink by this time, Tom. Don't you think so? ha."

"I have not the slightest doubt of it, my lord," replied Tom Hamilton. "But how will you manage about the funeral? all the undertakers and people must know."

"Not they, not they," cried the peer. "By jingo you're not half so clever a fellow as I thought you. We have got the coffin in already, man. Don't you see, when the fellow came to talk to me about the matter, I laid my finger by the side of my nose, and looking wonderfully secret, I said that the peculiar and somewhat mysterious nature of the verdict given by the coroner's jury, required very great precautions, and that therefore he must make me a coffin by guess without seeing the body. So then I winked at him, and he winked me, and then I slapped him on the back, and we parted, roaring with laughter; I laughing at him and all the world, and he laughing because I laughed, and thinking me a very funny fellow."

"But my dear lord," said Tom Hamilton, "you do not keep up your character of a mourning father very well."

"Can't be helped, Tom, can't be helped," replied the peer; "it's the nature of some men; it's their nature, I say, to laugh at the death of their nearest relations, in their sleeves, if not in their pocket handkerchiefs. I dare say Freddy will do the same for me when my time comes. But 'pon my soul, I must go and see this little girl that we have got here. I have not visited the pretty prisoner for a long while, and she'll think me uncivil; and as Freddy is coming down to-morrow, and must be introduced to her as his own cousin, we must smooth her down a bit."

Tom Hamilton shook his head disapprovingly, but the peer exclaimed with some heat—

"Stuff and nonsense, Tom! By jingo, she shall marry him before she quits this house. Why it's the only way of saving the estate, and I've got her father's consent, you know."

"Not to keeping her here, and marrying her against her will, I should think," replied Tom Hamilton.

"It's all the same, it's all the same," cried the peer, rising and moving towards the door. But before he reached it, he stopped, turned back, and took half a tumbler-full of wine, saying—"Why, Tom, I feel very queer at my stomach! I am sickish—I am devilish sick—why, what's come to me?—Why I never was sick in my life!" and down he sat in a chair.

Tom Hamilton moved towards the cellaret, and brought out a bottle of brandy.

"Curaçoa, Tom," cried the viscount in a faint voice; curaçoa is stronger."

Tom Hamilton moved back again, with a solemn step, and got the curaçoa.

"Why what the devil are you so long about?" cried the peer; "I shall vomit before you come—what makes you so slow?"

"Because I'm as sick as you are," answered Tom Hamilton, in a dolorous tone.

"It's those beastly truffles," said the peer, looking at a dish that

stood upon the table: "they always do make me dream of paving-stones, when I eat them."

"I don't know what it is," replied Tom Hamilton, setting down the bottle, and making a quick march towards the door; "I don't know what it is, but I must go."

He came back in about five minutes, with a face very white, and eyes very red, looking somewhat like a cockney young lady at the end of a delightful aquatic excursion.

"I shall be better now," he said, filling himself out a wine-glassfull of curaçoa, the bottle containing which had suffered a considerable diminution in weight since last he handled it.

"I am a little better," rejoined the peer; "give me a wine-glassfull of the stuff, Tom."

"What! havn't you had any?" cried Tom Hamilton.

"Oh yes, a tumblerfull," replied the peer; "but it is no use doing things by halves. Here, Jerry Tripe," he continued, as the butler at that moment entered the room, "take away those cursed truffles, and tell the cook not to send up any more. I am better now, Tom; I am a devilish deal better now; so I'll go and see pretty Laura Longmore."

"Had you not better let me go, my lord?" said Tom Hamilton; "you want a little rest. What between ghosts and truffles, maids and curaçoa, you've had rather an active day of it. I'll be your deputy, with a great deal of pleasure."

"No, no, you dog," cried the peer; "what between your black whiskers and your white face, you'd frighten her. Why, Tom, what's come to you? Take another glass of liqueur; you look like a sick sheep or a white-faced rook. No, my lad, no; you were born for a poacher, but you shan't fire a gun upon Freddy's manor at all events till he's down here himself to look after the game."

Thus saying, the peer walked out of the room, and Tom Hamilton set himself down to think for a moment, taking the peer's advice with regard to the curaçoa. Now Tom Hamilton, with all his faults, was a man of honor, and as some great philosophers have defined man to be nothing but a receptacle for putting ideas into, in his case there were a great many good things in the bottom of the bag, although there was a good deal of rubbish at the top. It had never entered into the imagination of Tom Hamilton hitherto that he might set Laura Longmore free, deliver her from the Fitzurse faction, establish a claim upon her gratitude, and perhaps carry off a nice little rich wife, to the discomfiture of his noble host, and the disappointment of his honorable friend. But the peer did the most impolitic thing in the world; he put all this into Tom Hamilton's head in a minute. By suggesting to the mind of any man, an evil action, whether we present it in the shape of a suspicion of his intentions, or a temptation to his virtue, we plant in his heart a seed which will germinate sooner than we generally believe, which will shoot out roots almost impossible to be eradicated, and which will always have the devil at hand to water it, and hoe it, and dress it, and tend it, and plant a pea-stick for it to creep up till it needs no farther attention.

In a single minute Tom Hamilton's mind had clearly perceived that

it was almost an act of duty upon his part to assist in freeing Laura Longmore—that she was unjustly detained—that he was actually conniving at a very abominable transaction. In the next place, his friend Fitzurse was under a very serious engagement to poor little Jane, and therefore it was but just and right to her to remove this temptation from his way. He had promised, too, to do every thing in his power to induce Mr. Fitzurse to keep his oaths and engagements, whether manuscript or vocal; and how was this to be done without putting a bar between him and Laura Longmore? She was pretty, very pretty, he had heard: the peer had vowed that she had the neatest little foot and ankle in the world, and had talked of the bare skin of her instep as if it had been an oyster. Tom Hamilton was fond of pretty women—a *leltle* too fond perhaps; but he flattered himself that he would make a very good husband notwithstanding; and he was not mistaken. He was a handsome fellow too, and an amusing one—of both which points he was quite well aware; and thus, all things considered, Laura's good was as much consulted as that of any one. The peer, too, might get himself into a desperate scrape if the thing were to go on; and Fitzurse might get himself hanged, for Laura was an heiress, and forced marriages with heiresses were in those days somewhat severely dealt with. In fact, with a facility truly wonderful every argument for using his advantages to the utmost rose up in Tom Hamilton's mind; and then, to conclude the whole, came the thought of what a nice thing it is to marry an heiress. The vision of a beautiful little curricie, with two bright thoroughbred bays of about fifteen hands high, with a cross bar as bright as a sunbeam, and a black and silver harness, whirling him through the park, with a sweet girl with a lace veil by his side, presented itself to Tom Hamilton's imagination; and he was in the act of asking himself what was to be done, when the voice of the viscount at its very highest pitch came echoing through the whole house, and reached the dining-room where Tom Hamilton was sitting. At the same time the ringing of the state-room bell, as if its clapper would have gone mad, was heard far and wide.

“Jerry! Jane! Sally! John! Peter! Tom! Wilson!” shouted the viscount. “Tom Hamilton! Tom Hamilton! Why, what the devil is this?”

Tom darted out through the dining-room doorway, up the stairs, and into Laura's room as fast as he could go. The first object his eyes lighted upon was the viscount in a state of absolute frenzy. He had been somewhat irritable all day; the scene with the maids had not tranquillized him; the ghost had rather increased his rage; the sickness had not pleased him, and the curaçoa had not tended to calm. His red nightcap—an object on which passions were apt to vent themselves—had been torn violently from his head and cast under his feet, and he was now engaged in the pleasant and intellectual occupation of stamping upon it vehemently, as if that was the only way to relieve his mind.

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The deplorable effects of plagiarizing a book.

"Why, what's the matter, my lord?" exclaimed Tom, as soon as he beheld them. "Where is the young lady?"

"She's gone, she's off, by jingo," cried the peer, "she's departed. Hang me, if ever I saw such a thing in my life. Jerry, you scoundrel, the girl's gone off. What the deuce is to be done now? Jane, how did this happen? Sally, have you had any hand in helping her? Run, Peter, like lightning, you have the longest legs in the house, and tell all the grooms and the coachman to saddle horses and to gallop like fury to the park gates, and to the stile near the village. Keep watch, and let nobody pass that is not known. Who saw her last?"

"I did, I suppose, my lord," said Jane, "for I came to do the room about twelve, after all that fuss was over."

"Ah! you little jade," cried the peer, shaking his fist at her, "are you sure she was here then?"

"Quite sure, my lord," answered Jane, "for I saw her and talked to her, and I locked the door after me quite carefully."

"Has any one else seen her?" cried the peer.

"Yes, my lord, I saw her," said Sally, with her pert air. "I saw her about half-past nine when I brought up the breakfast, and had a long chat with her too, and she said to me, says she, 'What a great shame it is I should be kept here in this way;' and so, says I, 'that it is, miss.'"

"D—n what you said!" cried the peer; "d—n what she said! You said, and she said, and you talked like two great fools. Have you seen her since, I say?"

"No, that I haven't," said Sally, "for I had enough to do this morning with all the noise and the fuss that was made about nothing at all. So Jane had to do this room while I did Mr. Hamilton's."

"They will drive me mad amongst them," cried the peer. "Some one must have let her out."

"Hallo!" cried Tom Hamilton, who had approached the window, "here are the sheets tied together and fastened to the bar of the window. She has let herself down! By Jove! I like that girl, she is up to any thing! Come, come, my lord, don't fume and fret; perhaps it's as well as it is. You know if you had forced her to marry Fitzurse against her will they might have hanged you."

"Hanged me?" cried the peer; "I should like to see them."

"Feel them, you mean, my lord," said Tom Hamilton; "few men see themselves hanged. I never heard of any one but the looking-glass maker, who fell in love with the reflection of himself, and committed suicide in the midst of his own shop."

"Tom, you're a noodle," cried the peer. "Let them bring me out a horse, and bring Mr. Hamilton's too: we'll gallop over all the country and see if we can catch her till dinner-time; if we can't, we'll come back, eat our dinner, have a pot of caviare, a couple of bottles of claret, and finish the night over such a bowl of punch as will keep all the ghosts in Europe at a mile's distance for fear of singing their whiskers."

CHAPTER XLI.

MADMOISELLE BROCHET OBTAINS NEW LIGHTS—THE UNCONSCIOUS WITNESSES—
THE REPOSE OF WIDOWHOOD DISTURBED—THE RETALIATION—THE SECRETS OF
THE BANDBOX IN DANGER—LAURA FOUND AND LOST—ILL-REQUITED CHIVALRY.

MADMOISELLE Brochet tripped out of the principal back door of Outrun Castle with her usual elegant and graceful wriggle, not forgetting her attitudes even though she turned to gaze around her to ensure that none of the rude alguazils of the place were in pursuit of her. Gradually, however, as she went on undisturbed, her mind became more composed. She slackened her pace, which was at first somewhat rapid; when half across the park, she untied the strings of her bonnet; a little farther on she stopped and tied her garter, then looked round with a timid and fluttered look, put her hand before her face, and exclaimed—

“La! suppose any body had seen me!”

Within the walls of Outrun Castle she had occasionally forgotten herself, but now she was all Mademoiselle Brochet again from top to toe.

“Dear me,” she said, as she walked on, “it be very early. *La Belle Muggins* will be shock at me staying out all de night—think me naughty gal—say I commit *faux-pas*. I wonder if dey be up yet? I tink I call upon *la charmante Scapulaire*. She early woman, *Scapulaire*—she out very early dat mornin’ to fetch her husband milk when somebody come to hang him—vary agreeable dat, vary nice—not pleasant be dere and see him hang—oh no, no; but I do tink she have fingare in de pye, and we find de gravy on it before we are done.”

Thus saying, she tripped on, crossed the stile, passed the *pons Tripi*, and looked at the windows of Mrs. Scapulaire’s cottage. The shutters were shut, however, and Mademoiselle Brochet was directing her steps onward towards the Half-Moon, when the sounds of voices in the churchyard arrested her attention and her steps at the same time. They were the sweet sounds of merry voices in the sports of youth—the sounds that come to every ear and every age with some bland and dear association—that call to fellow infancy to come and join the joyous game—that in manhood wake parental tenderness and love, and the soft spirit throned in the inmost heart for purposes the holiest and most bright; and in declining age rouse the memories of that early day when the now setting sun of life first dawned in all her past-by splendour—the sounds that to the calm and virtuous heart speak like the tongues of angels from the skies, communing with the spirits of the pure below—sounds that may call the worldly and the selfish away from their moral dross to holier and to higher things, by the sole divine feeling that

exists in every breast—the sounds that from the hard heart of guilt itself may bring the tears of penitence, and give back the light of hope by bringing back the feelings of a better time, and proving virtue not entirely dead—the voices of children at their play.

He heard them, and, light and wayward, vain and somewhat careless as he was, the sounds were pleasant to his ear, stirring up deeper thoughts. “Ay, I remember well the time,” he said, “when I used to stop upon the church-yard path and play at marbles with my school-fellows, with the graves all round us and the long grass waving green. Ay, I remember it well. Those were happy days. I will go and see what the urchins are about.”

Walking up gracefully to the church-yard stile Joey crossed it, and then seated himself on the top bar, looking a somewhat disconsolate damsel, it must be confessed, in his character of Mademoiselle Brochet. About ten yards before him, on the broad gravel path formed of smooth, well-beaten pebbles, was a group of four or five boys, some playing at taw-in-the-ring, some looking on. There was laughing and there was joking mixed up with two of the great ingredients of boy-life, teasing and bullying; and ever and anon there was a little bit of something which approached to conversation. Joey Pike, unremarked, listened with all his ears, longing to be a boy again, and—like Adam, just when he was walking away from the gate of the garden of Eden—wishing with all his heart that he had never tasted of the tree of knowledge—a bitter and unwholesome fruit to most men, with a stone at the heart of it.

“I am sure you never did, in all your life,” said a boy of thirteen to a boy of twelve. “Come, let us see you. If you did it before you can do it now.”

“No, I can’t,” replied the other boy; “but I did do it, though. It hit this one, and then that one, and then bounced off and knocked that one out of the ring.”

“It’s a lie I’m sure,” rejoined the other boy. “Why, I’ve been here every morning, and I didn’t see you, so I’m sure it’s a lie.”

“You might have seen me if you had liked,” answered the other, “but you was up in the chesnut tree, for it was that day that old Scap was murdered, and just when Tom Smalldram the tinman and rabbit-seller was coming by.”

“Ah, he gave it a kick, I dare say,” said the boy, who was resolved not to be convinced.

“No, he didn’t,” replied another stripling of eleven or thereabouts, “for he didn’t come near us at all; he turned off by old Mother Crump’s grave, and jumped over the wall at the corner there.”

“Ah!” said Mademoiselle Brochet: and after the conversation had proceeded to two or three more attacks and rejoinders, she called to her the lesser of the two disputants, saying—

“Come here, Master Jones. How do you do? how do your mother?”

“Very well, thank ye, ma’am,” said the boy, walking up shily and making his bow.

"So you know goot Meester Small dram. He vary well, I hope? When you see him last?"

"I don't know, ma'am," replied the boy, "I see him that ere day as old Scap were murdered. He come across here at a great rate.

"He very busy that morning, I dare say?" replied Mademoiselle Brochet.

"Why, I saw him come out of old Scap's house," rejoined the biggest boy. "I dare say he was going to fetch a doctor. So mother said when I told her. I was up in the horse-chesnut tree, getting down the blossoms, and he came out and over the stile in a great hurry."

"Ay, you very nice boy, indeed," said Mademoiselle Brochet. "What your name?"

"I am Ned Bellasis, the blacksmith's son," replied the boy.

"And I'm Tommy Wilson," said the little one who had seen Master Small dram's saltation of the wall.

"Ah! all vary goot boys, indeed," said Mademoiselle Brochet, putting her hand in her reticule, and bringing out a quantity of halfpence. "There's someting for you to buy marble. Goot mornin', goot mornin'. Share dem amongst you. Come, come, Meester Bellows-us, you divide it fair. I vill not have you take treepence and give de leetle boy one halfpenny a-piece."

Thus saying, she made the distribution herself; and then, re-crossing the stile, advanced to the door of Mrs. Scapulary's house, which was now open, as well as the windows. Mademoiselle Brochet was too well acquainted with the character of the sort of person she represented to affect the slightest delicacy in the world. She knew it was only necessary to put on an air and a grace, and a look of perfect self-satisfaction, in order to do the most impudent thing in Europe without violating any of the unities; and thus she sailed into the cottage of Mrs. Scapulary with the sweetest and most benignant smile in the world upon her countenance, seeming to think that her early visit was conferring the greatest possible favour upon that excellent lady. Mrs. Scapulary, however, did not think so at all, and looked as if she did not think it, but Mademoiselle Brochet was cased in the armour of a French waiting-maid, and it must be a sharp look, indeed, to pierce through that panoply.

"Ah! Madame Scapulaire," she said, "how you do since yesterday? I hope you was quite well."

Mrs. Scapulary said internally, "None the better for seeing of you;" but the external woman only flounced, and she said—

"I'm well enough; what should make me otherwise?"

"Ah, you don't know," said Miss Brochet, "you don't know what may be doing in de world to make you udderwise. Vary shocking, vary shocking, indeed—terrible man, dat Small dram—shocking man, 'pon my life!"

No cameleon ever turned half the colours that were displayed by Mrs. Scapulary's countenance at that moment, but it ended in very much the natural hue of the reptile aforesaid, namely, a dull, ashy grey. Now, Mrs. Scapulary was not altogether a virtuous woman;

she was not as pure as a member of parliament; she had not knowingly never committed "*any corrupt practices*;" she had committed a few peccadilloes with all her wits about her, and a great deal of good fun she had got out of them; and, as usual, the fears and apprehensions of detection which lie watching for their prey by the side of the high-road of wickedness had occasionally run after Mrs. Scapulary and caught hold of her too. However, as every one knows, time and practice get rid of such apprehensions; and before she had come down to the village of Outrun she was pretty well clear of all fears concerning ordinary sins and wickedness; but there is a fact, which perhaps the reader does not know, which is, that every fresh and unaccustomed crime brings its own train of terrors along with it. You might have talked of adultery, fraud, swindling, cheateery, for an hour in Mrs. Scapulary's presence without making her fidget upon her chair; but she had lately entered upon a new line of business, and her conscience, although it was a battered hack, which you might flog till you were weary on most parts of the body, had a raw about the neck which would not bear flipping. The very name of Mr. Smalldram and wickedness instantly produced a palpitation of the heart and a tremulous movement of the hands which was not unobserved by Miss Brochet. The widow became civil in an instant; she put a chair for Mademoiselle; she asked if she had breakfasted; she begged she would take a cup of tea with her; the water, she said, would boil in a few minutes.

"I will take von leetle cup of tea," said Mademoiselle Brochet, "but I tought it would just be *polis*—vat you call polite, my dear—to come and give you von leetle bit of warnin' dat Smalldram be von vary wicked, ugly man, and let you take your measure accordingly. If you marry Smalldram all people talk vary mush—he talk himself too mush—As de lady say in de play widin de play, dat is in Hamlet, 'None wed de second but who kill de first.' Ah! Smalldram, he be not von man dat I would trust; and den there be Joey Pike, beautiful Joey Pike, he who loof you so mush, he break his heart if you marry Smalldram."

"Lord! Miss Broachey," cried Mrs. Scapulary, "what can you mean about Joey Pike, and how can you know?"

"Ah, Joey great friend of mine," replied Mademoiselle Brochet; "he be in service wid von gentleman while I was kept by anoder gentleman and lady in Eetaly. How I know? why all de people say here he murder old Scap, as dey call him, all for loof of you."

"Oh, I'm sure he didn't murder him," said Mrs. Scapulary, who had now made up her mind to her conduct, "at least I don't think so now. I shouldn't wonder if Smalldram had, but that's between you and I, Miss Broachey. I know he was about the place that morning, for I saw him scuttling away just as I was coming back with the milk. I'll go and tell the magistrates about it immediately after breakfast, and then they can do as they like."

"It might be good," said Mademoiselle Brochet, thoughtfully; "he just the man I should fancy to say you do it, if you don't say he."

"Say I did it!" exclaimed Mrs. Scapulary. "Lord, Miss Broachey That would be a lie indeed. Poor dear old man, to think that I would strangle him!—I that had nursed him so tenderly!"

"Ah, vary wicked man, vary shocking wicked man indeed, dat Smalldram," replied Mademoiselle Brochet; "there be no knowing what he say next; but if I be you, Meestress Scapulaire, I would do what your English Jack sailor call vork to vindvard of him, dat I would."

"So I will," muttered Mrs. Scapulary to herself; "that's no bad advice neither. Now, my dear, cut yourself some bread and butter, and I'll make the tea. You've heard this wicked man say something, I suppose?"

"Oh no, not heard nothing," answered the French lady, "only just de people say he have got great quantity of money just now—dat he brag about his reeches, swear he marry you, and be vary reech man indeed."

"Ay, indeed, he reckons without his host," said Mrs. Scapulary; "but I'll do what I have said, upon my honour."

"Vell, I tink you quite right," replied Mademoiselle Brochet; "you go tell magistrates dat he did it—make all de people believe you did not do it yourself. Vary good plan, Meestress Scapulaire, vary good plan indeed."

The conversation of Mademoiselle Brochet was decidedly painful to Mrs. Scapulary. In the first place, she never clearly understood what her fair companion was about; under her broken English came a thousand unpleasant little intendoes, which kept her in a high state of uncomfortable excitement, and though she felt herself obliged to be civil, yet, to say the truth, she wished the worthy French lady as far at least as Hades. Mademoiselle Brochet understood the whole business very well, and found a sort of malicious satisfaction in teasing the fair widow. Thus she went on, rattling, laughing, talking, drinking tea, eating bread and butter, and every now and then throwing in some sly observation upon murder, manslaughter, gallows, executions, trials, and imprisonments, till poor Mrs. Scapulary went through a thousand fevers with a shaking stage of fear and the hot stage of anger, till at length, under the influence of the latter crisis, she said to herself—

"Well, my pretty girl, I'll give you a bone to pick. Ay," she continued aloud, "they are terribly severe the people here; take care they don't catch hold of you, mademoiselle, for I think it's but friendly to tell you that they're looking after you on account of the pocket-handkerchiefs and lace you talked about. You shouldn't speak of such things in every body's hearing, for the custom-house is very strict you know, and they say you are nothing better than a smuggler; so they are going to have you up before the magistrates, examine your boxes, and see what you've got in them."

Mademoiselle Brochet paid very little attention to the hint, for she was fully persuaded that Mrs. Scapulary was telling a lie; but when she had taken leave of that lady, and had returned to her quarters at

the Half Moon, she was visited by Mrs. Muggins, who shut the door with an air of some precaution, and exclaimed—

“Why, Joey, here has been Tillman the constable inquiring a good deal about you and about your boxes.

Joey looked somewhat surprised and dismayed.

“I hope there’s nothing in that handbox of yours that you care about,” continued Mrs. Muggins.

“Alas! there is, fair Muggins, alas! there is,” cried Joey, casting himself into the attitude of profound despair. “If they have got that box I am lost.”

“Why, what in the name of fortune is in it?” exclaimed the landlady of the Half Moon.

“My breeches!” sighed Joey, with tears in his eyes, “my breeches!”

“Oh! if that’s all,” said Mrs. Muggins, “there’s no great harm done; every woman looks to wear them at one time of her life. They have not got the box, Joey, but as it is smuggled goods I hear they are after, if you’ll just keep out of the way during the day I’ll let them take a peep into the box, and that will satisfy them, I dare say.”

“An extremely good plan, *belle* Muggins,” replied Mademoiselle Brochet, “so I will just go out the *back* way through the garden, cross the meadow and the orchard, and then round into the lane again. I will find *moyens* to employ my time till evening. Adieu, adieu!” and with a graceful courtesy he quitted his fair landlady, and proceeded on his way.

In telling a story, sweet and delectable reader, one of the greatest arts is to know what not to tell. Imagination, curious and busy jade that she is, likes to have a finger in every pie; and you had better let her or she will pout with you all through the book. Then, again, we are informed that the truth is not to be told at all times, so that if you have got any truth about you, bag it and keep it up, like a cottager’s fitch of bacon, or an Arab’s bag of dates, only to be used on high days and holydays, or like a bottle of choice *anno domini*, an especial treat for an ancient friend. Then, again, there are things which are mighty true and mighty reasonable, which might prove also mighty tedious, like a long discussion upon nothing at all, which you should never inflict upon the reader, except for the express purpose of teasing him; and there are many other things which an author ought to keep as secret as the inside of a diplomatist’s portfolio. For which of the above-mentioned reasons it is quite unnecessary to state, but we shall keep to ourselves, without affording any explanation whatever, the whole of the proceedings of Joey Pike during the next eleven hours, twenty-four minutes, and fifteen seconds.

It was just five minutes, forty-five seconds past nine o’clock, then, when Joey parted with Mrs. Muggins at the sign of the Half Moon, and now behold him, at half-past eight o’clock at night precisely, standing like a “Herald Mercury” on the top of the stile leading into Outrun park, balanced on the tip of his right toe, with his left foot extended behind, his right hand slightly raised before, and

a slight smile of sweet self-satisfaction on his lips to think how beautiful and graceful was his attitude. The next moment he descended with a bound into the park, and murmured to himself and of himself, "Gazelle!"

The shades of night were falling, the sky was grey, the air was somewhat heavy, and at each step as Joey walked on darker and darker grew the hour and brighter grew his thoughts. The idea of delivering Laura from the giant of Outrun Castle made him feel himself quite a *preux chevalier*. He longed to cast off his petticoats and buckle on his armour, to do great and glorious deeds on behalf of the lady, and kick some insolent clown attempting to stop them, half way to the moon. By the time he had crossed one third of the park it was nearly dark, and when he had got about a quarter of a mile farther he began to think it odd that Laura did not appear.

"*Quelque empêchement,*" he said, "I will stay under these trees and watch till she comes."

In vain did he watch, in vain did he wait. Nine o'clock striking in the village was borne in soft sounds to his ear by the gentle south-westerly wind. Half-past nine—ten o'clock arrived. With a palpitating heart, with an agitated frame, with a discomposed mind, Joey waited till half-past ten, and then was calculating whether he should boldly make an assault upon Outrun Castle, or show that he had patience and resolution sufficient for a night watch, when he suddenly saw two persons coming along towards him at a very little distance.

"'Tis she," he thought, "'tis she!"

But, heaven and earth! what did he hear the next moment.

"If you try to run a step or say a word," cried a rough man's voice,

"I will knock you to pieces in an instant!"

Joey Pike was astounded. These words were addressed to Laura, to Laura herself—pretty Laura Longmore—for there she evidently was, driven along towards the village of Outrun with a tall, powerful man following close at her heels. Prudence and chivalry made a sad struggle of it in Joey Pike's bosom, but chivalry got the better, for he started forward exclaiming—

"Hallo! Who you be? What you is doing?"

Alack! the fate that sometimes falls on gallant men. Almost as he spoke, and before he could parry it, he received a blow between the eyes, and the next instant he was lying upon his back in the grass with very little inclination to get up again.

CHAPTER XLII.

LAURA LONGMORE RECKONS WITH FORTUNE—BUT RECKONS WITHOUT HER HOST
—A QUOI REVENT LES JEUNES FILLES—AN UNWELCOME VISITOR—THE FLIGHT
AND PURSUIT—A SECOND TRAP—CAUGHT AT LAST.

WHEN Laura was reinstated in her own chamber, after having escaped from the den of Jerry, or Jeremiah, Tripe, she sat down to consider whether she ought to congratulate or bemoan herself—whether to think herself very fortunate, or the most unlucky girl under the sun. It is not at all an uncommon predicament, reader, to be placed in, and indeed those questions might be applied to the heart of every human being a thousand times more frequently than they are asked; for, as the old adage is very true, that “all is not gold that glitters,” so does it very often happen, that the most splendid occurrences, which befall us in life are but misfortunes in a gilded garb; while disappointment, and even sorrow, are not unfrequently but as the dewy mists of the morning, which cool the air and soften the ground, and produce fruits and flowers we little dream of. Oh! many, many is the occasion in life when man weeps or laughs, and yet would do much better if he were to sit down and ask himself, “Am I really fortunate or unfortunate?”

Laura, however, had very self-evident causes for putting such questions to herself, and, as is very usual with all the events which befall humanity, she found there was a little of both good and bad luck in all that had occurred to her during the preceding night. Very unlucky did she think herself in having her escape cut off at the very moment when it had been so well planned and arranged; but very lucky in having got out of Jerry Tripe’s ghost-trap, when there seemed not the slightest possible chance of such a consummation. She reflected, too, that all is not lost which is delayed; and, as Jane had promised to aid her that very night—Jane, whose power to set her free she looked upon as absolute—Laura consoled herself by thinking that nothing could now prevent her from getting away from Outrun Castle in the most comfortable manner possible. Alack-and-a-well-a-day, how we do reckon without our host in this good world of ours! But we have spoken upon that part of the subject before, and as our wish indubitably is to get on, with the utmost rapidity, to the end of our tale, we won’t detain the reader in this place to descant upon the whims and vagaries of destiny. Laura settled the matter comfortably, then, in her own mind, that she should get away that very night, with Jane for a guide, and Joey Pike for a protection. But having had her natural rest somewhat abridged during the preceding night, and looking forward to more fatigue than her pretty little frame was accustomed to, she thought it would be a very comfortable plan to take a little more

repose while she could get it. Accordingly, having cast off all those incumbrances with which our unfortunate humanity has been loaded ever since our fair and frail ancestress, our *urütermutter*, Eve, was persuaded, by the grand originator of all blarney, to eat the forbidden apple, and get her husband into the same scrape as herself, Laura stepped into bed again just as the clock struck that single note which indicated that half an hour had past since the hour of seven. She laid down her head upon the pillow; she fancied that she would go to sleep, but she was mistaken, for her mind was too full of thoughts for the drowsy goddess to have power over her; and she lay, revolving all those manifold images which dance before the mental eyes of a girl of nineteen.

Now, it is probable that there is nobody in Europe, no, not Bulwer, nor James, nor Balzac, nor Hugo, nor Tiek—nay, nor she who has unsexed herself, and grafted on the weaknesses of woman the fiercer licentiousness of man—it is probable, I say, that nobody in Europe is able at all to describe what are the imaginings of a pure-hearted girl of nineteen. But the Chevalier de Lunatico is a privileged person. Woman's thoughts are, to him, all open, and therefore we can tell exactly what were Laura's fancies, as she lay there and thought *omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*. First in that vast category was the hope of speedily meeting those she loved again. Her father—yes, reader, it was of her father she thought first; for though if we had put the hard question to her, and insisted upon her answering it, which she loved best, her father or Harry Worrel, we should have agitated her a great deal, and in the end made her weep, which would be quite answer enough; yet she thought of her father first upon a threefold principle—affection, habit, duty; and she pictured to herself how glad he would be to see her, how his kind and good-natured heart would overflow—how, the very first night she returned to Ivy-Hall—she forgot it was burnt down—he would make her sit opposite to him in the soft, low sofa, in the corner, and take a hit at backgammon, and talk about the stars and electrosopes, and transit instruments; and, warmed into tenderness at recovering her, would be in the best humour possible with the whole universe, would speak of Orion, and Lyra, and the Great Bear, as if they were dear friends, and would end by consenting to her marriage with Harry Worrel, or any body else she liked.

Having got thus far, dear reader, it was an easy leap to think of Harry Worrel himself, and of how much she loved him, and of being married to him, and of the pretty bonnet she would have on her wedding day, with a sprig of orange flower resting on her glossy brown hair; and of going away with him on a tour; and her heart got a little fluttered, and she grew somewhat nervous, but she soon consoled herself in a sweet long walk with him, through some beautiful shady lanes and green meadows, and by the side of a babbling brook, with a trout springing at a fly, here and there; and she thought it would be very happy, indeed, to feel herself bound to him for ever, with the irrevocable words spoken, which placed her fate in his hands, her happiness in his keeping. Oh! sweet and beautiful trust of woman, what a bright and fine thing thou art, when,

in the heart's purity and the guileless simplicity of youth, thou takest all the treasures of existence, the rubies, and emeralds, and diamonds of warm and unpolluted affections, the pearls of the heart's tenderness, the gold of bright expectations and happy dreams, and castest them all, without a fear, into the lap of him thou lovest, and sayest, in full confidence, "Keep them for thee and me." So was Laura Longmore prepared to do; and as she lay there and contemplated that act, it rejoiced her heart, and she paused upon it, dreaming sweet dreams, with a bosom as pure and sunshiny, as calm and holy, as the bright summer morning, when every thing in nature raises the praiseful voice of joy to the throne of the Almighty benefactor.

Upon the wings of such gentle thoughts came sleep, which had lasted about an hour when Jane, the housemaid, came in at the stated hour of nine o'clock. Alas! reader, it is a terrible thing to be called in the morning. No man should ever order his servant to do it without a strong motive—or, at least, without considering well what he is about. How many a bright vision is broken through, far sweeter than any thing that waking life can give, by that hateful tap at the door! How many an airy hope is blighted; how many a dreamy fortune destroyed; how much joy and satisfaction, prosperity, advancement, station, consideration, is swept away; what bright qualities of mind, eloquence, genius, imagination, are frequently all lost and ruined by that sad tap at the door! Whether it be to be hanged or to be married, to fight a duel or to eat our breakfast, depend upon it, reader, when one rises in the morning one leaves the brightest jewel of life under one's pillow, unless one supped the night before on pork and suet dumplings.

Laura wished Jane had been a little later, for she was busy with such dreams as might well follow such thoughts as those which we have seen her entertain, and it was with some unwillingness that she arose and dressed herself, to go through the ordinary dulness of the day. Not long after, however, by the time that she was fully dressed, and had sat down to breakfast, the silence of the house was broken by sundry calls, shouts, and exclamations, and then the rapid pattering of manifold feet up the stairs, past her door, through the corridor, across to the picture gallery, and in every possible direction round her room. Laura could not conceive what was the matter, but in the end the sounds, after varying in their character for some time, diminished, died away, and all was placid. Not long after that again, Sally, the housemaid, reappeared, took away the breakfast things, chatted a few minutes with the young lady, raised the family of Outrun in her estimation, by relating the viscount's proceeding in regard to the maids, and then disappeared, leaving Laura to enjoy an hour of solitary thought. At the end of that time something made the handle of the door rattle, and she started and looked round. Whoever was on the outside was evidently a personage not much accustomed to open that lock, for twice he touched it delicately, without succeeding, and then shook it violently, as giving way to a fit of impatience.

The next moment, however, the key was turned, the door was opened, and a head was thrust in which made Laura start up from the

table in terror and dismay. It was that of a man, of perhaps fifty years of age, with long and shaggy locks, which had evidently been neither cut nor combed for many a week, with a beard which, for fourteen or fifteen days, at least, had not known the touch of a razor, and a skin pale with dirt, and apparently with want of food. The hair and beard had once been jet black, but were now thickly strown with gray, and from underneath a pair of long and bushy eyebrows looked out two keen and glittering blue eyes, rolling rapidly around the chamber, as if in search of some one. Those eyes rested upon Laura but for a moment, and then ran on, looking into every corner, with a fierce and eager fire that made her blood run cold. But then, they turned to her again, scanning her face with a look of intense inquiry, while the man's lips moved, as if he were murmuring something to himself, but no sounds were heard. The moment after, opening the door wider, he entered, and shut it behind him, laughing with a wild, strange, meaningless laugh, while his face continued grave, and even sad.

Poor Laura was dreadfully terrified, as may be supposed, for such was not at all the sort of person with whom she could have coveted a *tête-a-tête* at that moment. She felt a strong inclination to scream come over her—a sort of inclination which with women is sometimes irresistible, as the reader perhaps knows: but in this instance Laura did resist; and being, as we have shown, a very good little sensible girl, she was creeping rapidly towards the bell, which, unfortunately, lay on the other side of the bed, when her unwelcome visitor, apparently divining her intention, darted forward and interposed between her and the instrument of noise.

“Ha, ha!” he cried, “I have caught her, if I haven’t caught him, and now I’ll have my revenge.”

“Revenge upon me!” cried Laura, clasping her hands together; “I never did any thing to harm you, sir—you must mistake me for some one else.”

“No, no,” cried the man; “no, no; perhaps *you* never did me any harm, but he did, and that’s enough.”

“No one belonging to me!” cried Laura; “I am sure my father does good to every body; I do not think he has an enemy in the world.”

“Your father—your father!” cried the man, with a laugh; “It’s your husband I talk of.—And why should not I make your father’s heart as sore as *he* has made mine? I crept in here to tear the villain to pieces, but I’ve got you and that will do nearly as well.”

“For heaven’s sake—for pity’s sake listen to me,” cried Laura, keeping the table between her and her fearful guest. “You are mistaken altogether. I have no husband! I am Laura, the daughter of Mr. Longmore; and they are keeping me here a prisoner against my will.”

“No husband!” cried the man. “Ha, ha, ha! Then it is high time you should have one. I’ll be your husband. I’m a gay widower. My wife has been dead this twelvemonth.—Keep you here a prisoner, do they? Poor thing, then it’s time you should make your escape.—”

They kept me prisoner, too, but I was cunning—I was very cunning—and last Saturday, while they were all at church, I showed them how a man could get out of any place, when he's willing. I'll show you, too, and we'll make our escape the same way.—Come along, come along, and you shall see. We'll tie the sheets together, as I did, and then out of the window; and then we'll go and be married, and I'll make an honest woman of you, as he ought to do, the black villain. Oh, I wish I had his heart in my two hands, I'd tear it to pieces."

As he spoke he dragged the sheets from the bed, and tied them together in a hard knot, fastened one end to the bed-post, and, approaching the window, threw it open. Laura, as may well be conceived, was frightened very much, but luckily was not frightened out of her senses, which is always the worst plan a person can pursue. When, therefore, she saw the very tremendous personage who had invaded her apartment begin to busy himself with the sheets, she perceived the possibility of escape, and instantly determined to avail herself of it. As the reader knows, there were two doors to the room; that by which the readiest means of exit presented itself, however, namely, the great door, leading to the principal staircase, was considerably nearer to her unpleasant visitor than to herself, so that he could stop her in an instant if she attempted flight in that direction. The other was much nearer to herself, and though she had locked it, yet she had left the key in, and watching her moment, when he was at the window, she crept quietly to the door, opened it, and darted along the corridor like lightning.

In an instant she heard a loud oath and his foot pursuing. Terror seemed to give her wings, and on she flew to the small back staircase. Quicker and quicker came the steps behind her, however, and hoping she might be near some of the inhabited parts of the house, she screamed aloud for help, but without pausing in her flight for a moment. Down the steps she ran like lightning, and made straight for the door by which she had beheld Jerry Tripe enter on her first nocturnal expedition. Alas! when she tried to open it she found it locked. The man was now rushing furiously down the stairs after her. There was a door to the right and left—Laura had to choose between them, and, as is always the case when people choose in a hurry, she took the wrong one. It opened readily to her hand, and, under the impulse of terror, she darted in; but all she found was an empty room, without any outlet whatsoever. The door was instantly banged to behind her, and Laura heard a loud, wild, ringing laugh, that made the whole place echo, and then the key turned, making her more strictly a prisoner than ever. Wild with fear, she gazed up at the window as the only means of escape, but it, like all those at the back of the house, was strongly barred. Her next thought was, by what means she could stop the entrance of her pursuer; but the door had neither bolt nor bar in the inside, and she was evidently quite at his mercy. That he was a madman she could not doubt: his look, his words, his whole manner showed it; and when, after a few moments of agonizing suspense, she found that he did not appear, hope rose up again, and she fancied that he

might leave her there, and forget her. The next instant, however, showed her what a terrible situation she might be placed in, even if this hope were realized. She might be hours, days, weeks, before any body came to her deliverance. The room had evidently been long out of use; the window looked out into a small stone court, the long grass in which evinced how rarely it was trod by human foot. She knew that that part of the house was but rarely visited, and, full of terrible apprehensions in regard to what might befall her, the poor girl leaned upon the window-sill and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER XLIII.

**THE FATE OF MR. LONGSHANKS—THE STATE OF HIS RELATIONS WITH HIS HORSE
—MR. SMALLDRAM RE-APPEARS DE PROFUNDIS—MR. LONGSHANKS MISAPPRE-
HENDS THE DISORDER OF HIS PATIENT—HE SEARCHES FOR OCCULT EFFECTS AND
MEETS WITH SOME SAD SPECTACLES.**

REALLY we cannot help it—we feel it would be improper—in common courtesy, dear reader, we must not—it cannot be thought of—however much we may be interested in Laura; whatsoever may be our consideration for Joey Pike; though we may wish to return to Mr. Longmore, or Alderman Rotundity, or Harry Worrel; though we may be deeply affected by the sorrows of the viscount, or moved with respect and admiration by the virtues and high qualities of the Honourable Frederick Augustus, nevertheless we feel that we should be committing an act of the highest indecorum if we were to leave any longer our respected friend Mr. Longshanks just getting into his gig at the door of Rotundity Court. To him, then, we must now return, as he put on his dark-grey great-coat in the well-carpetted vestibule of the alderman's house, and wrapping a shawl-handkerchief round his chin and throat, left his nose, like the unfortunate figure-head of a ship, to brave the wind and weather as he dashed along. All this being done, Mr. Longshanks walked out with a footman lighting him, and putting a shilling into that official's hand—a good old custom, the decay of which most serving men regret—he stepped into his gig and took the reins and whip. The horse was a sleek bay gelding, some sixteen hands in height, without one wrinkle in all his glossy skin. He was an old servant, too, and horse and master knew each other well, with all their various whims and vagaries. As soon as he was seated round went the whip over Mr. Longshank's head, as if destined to fall with a most awful cut upon the shoulder of the bright bay; but not a bit did it touch him, and on the contrary, whizzing innocuous over his right ear, it made a terrible crack in the air, which the horse understood very

well as an intimation that it was time for him to move. Away he went, then, exactly at his own pace, perfectly aware of how much and how little he was to expect from his master; and in complete harmony together they dashed on towards the little village in which the worthy surgeon passed the eventide of life. When they came to the turning, however, which led down to Mr. Longshanks' own abode, there appeared some slight appearances of contention. It must be recollected and taken into consideration that it was Mr. Longshanks himself who had received a note summoning him from the dinner-table, and not the horse, so that the worthy gelding knew nothing about the matter; and being a staid and sober beast, by no means fond of gadding about, he had rejoiced himself all the way that he came along with the idea of eating his supper quietly at home, putting on his night-cap, and going to bed. We speak figuratively, dear reader, of course; for although Mr. Longshanks certainly had his own peculiar whims and oddities, yet we do not in the least mean to insinuate that his horses wore night-caps, or slept between Holland sheets. He was very kind to his horses, it is true, but whether it would have been kind to put them on such a system, may be a question for the curious. However, at the turning of the lane the horse was preparing to dart down with somewhat of an accelerated pace to the mansion, and when he found the rein pulled the other way, he was a little disappointed it must be acknowledged. That disappointment he displayed by a sudden swerve of the flank, which nearly whirled the light vehicle into the ditch; and Mr. Longshanks, who was not a man to be trifled with, thereupon made him feel that the instrument which he held in his hand, called a whip, could bite as well as bark.

And now, says the reader, and perhaps the publisher too, for publishers sometimes have the extraordinary self-assurance to comment upon stories that they do not understand in the least, even before they have seen the end of them, for which the Chevalier de Lunatico ought on all occasions to send them a ticket for his own sphere—and now, says the reader, “what in the name of fortune has all this history of the horse to do with the tale you are telling, and I am reading?”

Really, dearly beloved, we do not think it necessary to inform you, but the result of the horse's start to the side of the road was this, that up sprang out of the ditch the figure of a good stout man, who seemed to conceive that the proceedings of Mr. Longshanks, his gig, his horse, and his groom, were intended as a decided attack on himself.

“Who the devil are you?” cried Mr. Longshanks.

But to this friendly inquiry the gentleman out of the ditch offered no reply, and, on the contrary, making use both of his hands and his feet, he broke his way through the adjoining hedge and ran across the fields as hard as he could go.

“It's that scoundrel, Smalldram, sir,” said the groom; “he's for everlasting hanging about here.”

“Then tell William to take care of the silver spoons,” said Mr. Longshanks; and bringing the horse round, he drove up towards the

moor and stopped at the door of Nelly Bain's cottage. There was a light in the window, and the worthy surgeon descending with a precipitate step, muttered to himself, "Ay, I dare say she is ill enough, or she would never have sent that dirty scrawl to me. So I suppose she expects that I can come and cure her when she has gone and broken her heart like an idiot. She'll find herself very much mistaken though; I'll not cure her, why the deuce should I? Much better she should die. What's the use of her lingering on whining and pining, just like a person who wants to go and see their son in France, and yet dare not cross the water. I wonder whom the old fool has got to take care of her? I must send up somebody from the house."

Thus murmuring the good surgeon laid his hand upon the latch and tried to open the door, but it was locked, and he tapped for admission, gently at first, but the next moment with a good hard rap, and then a heavy blow.

"Who's there?" cried the voice of Nelly Bain. "You shan't come in till I know who it is!"

"Heyday!" cried the surgeon; "are you mad, Nelly Bain? Are you drunk? Are you stupid? Are you beside yourself? Did you not send for me, saying you wanted to see me directly?"

At the well-known sounds of the good surgeon's voice, the widow instantly opened the door, dropping a low courtesy as she did so, and saying, "Dear me, sir, I thought you would not come to-night, and I was afraid of keeping the door open."

The surgeon walked in, laid his cocked-hat deliberately down upon the deal table, undid the shawl-handkerchief from his neck and chin, and then taking the candle out of Mrs. Bain's hand, held it close to her face, till he had examined every feature and lineament therein; then setting it down again, he seated himself quietly in a chair, saying aloud, but in a meditative tone, "The woman's distraught! She's *non compos*! She's as mad as a march hare!"

Nelly Bain had once been a very pretty woman, her skin was clear and fair, and her face could not be said to be wrinkled, though there was a sort of Morocco-leather shrivelling of the cuticle, which indicated that that tegument had once been more filled out than it now was, and that the better part of life had worn away in cares and sorrows. Through that thin, clear, pale, and somewhat withered skin, now rose up a faint, delicate blush at the good surgeon's hard conclusions. She would not for the world have said a word that could offend him; she was unwilling to contradict him in any thing, or deny that he was right even in his rashest assertions, for he was her benefactor; nevertheless it was painful to her to hear herself called mad, especially by one she loved and venerated.

"No, sir," she said, "indeed I am not out of my mind: I never was better in my life."

"Then what the devil did you send for me for?" exclaimed Mr. Longshanks: "why did you rouse me from a comfortable dinner-party at Mr. Rotundity's, when you know you are quite well?"

"Bless my heart!" cried Widow Bain; "then the boy made a great mistake. I only sent the note to your own house, sir, and never thought he would go on after you. Indeed, indeed, sir, I would not for the world have roused you from your comfortable dinner. I would rather have remained up and watched all night. I am sorry indeed, sir, you were disturbed at dinner."

"D——n the dinner," said Mr. Longshanks; "you don't think I care a farthing about the dinner, do you?"

"Well, sir," rejoined the widow, "I do know, indeed, you care little enough about what you eat and drink; but I'm very sorry that foolish boy took you away from pleasant company."

"Pleasant company!—pleasant company!" exclaimed the surgeon—"the greatest pack of fools and knaves I ever saw in my life. There was that old fool, Rotundity, and that still greater fool, Longmore, and that gormandizing barrel of fresh pork, Deputy Popeseye, with a whole heap of horse-racing, card-playing, land-tilling tricksters—half-swindler, half-bumpkin—such as we see adorning the bench, sitting in parliament—making and dispensing the law, and very often breaking it too. Company, forsooth! Do you think I care for such company?"

"Well, sir," replied Nelly Bain, who had some inclination to weep, "all I mean to say is, I'm sorry to have disturbed you when you were comfortable."

"Comfortable!" cried Mr. Longshanks, whose indignation had not quite worked itself fine. "Drunk, I suppose you mean! But I can tell you, Nelly Bain, I have not been drunk since I was nineteen years old; when, in a mad frolic, as a surgeon's assistant, I frightened a poor girl into fits, from which she never recovered, and for which I never forgave myself, nor ever shall." And so saying he twisted his cocked-hat three times round upon the table, and looked into the crown.

"Well," he continued at length, after a deep sigh—"well, Nelly, if you are neither sick nor mad, why did you send for a surgeon? What do you want with me? You know if I can help you, you have nothing to do but to speak, my poor woman."

"I know that quite well, sir," replied Nelly Bain, with a tear in either eye. "You are always ready to help any one that needs it. But it wasn't about myself I sent, sir, it's about a very funny thing that has happened here, and I thought you being a magistrate and a gentleman——"

"Stop, Nelly," said Mr. Longshanks; "don't use the word gentleman lightly. It is a term that should be very rarely, very cautiously, and very respectfully applied to any one. Gold is the most precious of metals, Nelly, and diamonds the most precious of stones, but gold and diamonds are very plentiful things when compared to gentlemen. The first you find in many a fool's purse, the second you find hanging round the necks of flirts, and demireps, and half-harridans; but let me tell you, you may go into nine hundred and ninety-nine out of all the

saloons in Europe without finding such a thing as one true gentleman in them. A gentleman, Nelly, is not the man that wears fine clothes, either upon his body or his mind. I mean, not a man who dresses himself in silks and fine colours, smart coats and well-cut boots; who has a fashionable air, and assort his garments with all sorts of propriety: nor he, who on the principles of a Chesterfield, decks his mind with graceful thoughts, shapes his demeanour by the most approved rules, and studies all that may catch the outward senses of those with whom he mingles in this world. No, Nelly, no, this is not a gentleman; no more than a piece of gilded brass which bears the king's head upon one side, and his arms upon the other, is a guinea. The gentleman, Nelly, is the man who in his heart possesses the consciousness of universal benevolence and personal rectitude. The one giving to his whole manners and demeanour, grace, suavity, and gentleness; the other communicating to his countenance and his limbs both dignity and ease. This, Nelly, this is a gentleman: so, Nelly, you must not call me a gentleman."

"Well, sir, I won't," said Nelly, and Mr. Longshanks was not offended. "But, sir," she continued, almost as impatient as the reader to get on with her story, "I thought, as you were a magistrate you had better know what was going on."

"A great deal of wickedness, I dare say," said Mr. Longshanks, "that I had better know nothing about, Nelly."

"Well, sir," said Nelly, "you can judge of that when I have told you. The very first night I was here—that's to say after I came back again—as I was sitting with old Mrs. Maroon, who offered to stay and keep me company that night, a man looked in at the window, and when I went to the door to see who it was, there was a stout thick-set fellow, with his hand lifted up to the thatch, as if he were pulling a handfull of straw out. He made off as fast as he could when he saw me; and your honour coming in just then, said you had met Small-dram the tinman. Well, sir, two days ago Small-dram came up again and did just the same thing. I had gone out, down to the village, but was just coming back again and saw him take his hand away, and walk up over the common. I thought to myself when I saw him, that I would examine the place to which his hand was stretched out, but on giving a glance over it I found nothing. The thatch seemed all fast enough, and a good thatch it is, for my poor William did it himself. But to-night the man came again, just in the dusk, after I had shut the door, but before I had lighted the candle. Hearing a step I looked out through the window, and saw him clear enough, and I then perceived he had got his hand under the thatch, and that he took something out. I couldn't make out what it was, but he put either the part or the whole back again, and then away he went; and when he had gone about half an hour, I went out and felt under the thatch, and between it and the wall there seems to be a whole heap of things, some of them hard and some of them soft, but I could not take one of them out till I had sent for you, which I did as soon as possible. But you see, sir, I had nobody to

send except the little boy, Thompson, who came up for the milk-can, and he went on, I fancy, when he couldn't find you at home."

"We'll soon see, we'll soon see," cried the worthy surgeon. "Bring out the candle, Widow Bain; shade it with your apron, good woman, for there is a wind stirring. Now, Williamson," he continued, opening the door and speaking to the groom, "fasten the horse somewhere, and come hither to be a witness. There, that will do, that will do, tie him to the post. Now come hither, Nelly Bain. Nelly Bain, where's the place. D——n it, the woman's let the candle out. Woman, woman, thou art always like fortune in this world; thou lightest us up to within a step of the point desired, and then blowest out the light. Well, don't stand there, go and get another;" and Mr. Longshanks, in the abrupt impatience of his disposition, walked nine times from one side of the garden to the other before Nelly Bain could light the candle again.

When at length she appeared, her patron, to her surprise, walked straight up to the spot where she had seen Small dram the tinman with his hand under the thatch; for Mr. Longshanks had been intended by nature for a great general, and while she was lighting the candle he had calculated with the utmost nicety, the exact position in which the worthy tinman and rabbit-seller must have stood for the widow to see him out of her little cottage-window. Instantly thrusting his hand under the thatch he felt about for nearly a minute without finding any thing, but the next moment he drew forth a small shagreen case about six inches long, and two broad.

"You see, Nelly Bain," he cried, holding it up to the light. "You see, Williamson!"

"But there's more besides that, sir," said Nelly Bain.

"Not that I can find, Nelly," replied Mr. Longshanks, "feel yourself."

In vain, however, did the widow grope under the thatch, nothing more could she discover; and she ended by exclaiming, "He must have been up and taken them then, for I will swear that there was a bundle of papers like bank notes. I thought I heard a step half an hour ago."

"Ay, and we saw the scoundrel at the turning of the lane," said Mr. Longshanks. "But come in and let us see what this is."

Entering the cottage the worthy surgeon seated himself in a chair, Nelly Bain held the candle, and Williamson, the groom, looked over her shoulder. Mr. Longshanks lifted up the case before their eyes. It was old and worn, rounded at both ends, and somewhat corpulent about the waist. It bore an inscription upon one side, which probably would have caused Champollion or Young to pause and study the outside in the first instance, but Mr. Longshanks was resolved to see into the heart of the matter; and taking one end in each hand, he pulled the case in two; when, lo, in the inside appeared—a pair of spectacles!

Then, and not till then, he turned to examine the outside of the

case, when to the horror and admiration of all, appeared scratched in with the point of a knife, and blackened with soot or some other dusky pigment, the awful words, "Tobias Scapulary, 6th July, 17—"

"Ha!" said Mr. Longshanks; "this is important indeed, Nelly Bain; for although it is utterly impossible for the mind of man to enter into all the dark, obscure, and secret recesses of the human breast, and trace from the beginning in the small germs, in the seeds, Nelly Bain, of criminal desires and petty failings, the future horrible crimes and iniquities, strifes, broils, robberies, adulteries, murders, that are consequent upon some early error in education, or original fault of disposition, yet certain it is—— but I'll explain all that to you another time. At this moment we must act and not talk, so good night to you, Nelly Bain."

CHAPTER XLIV.

JOEY PIKE FINDS THE STILE IN POSSESSION OF SPIRITS NOT ETHEREAL—AN ETYMOLOGICAL DISCUSSION OF A DIABOLICAL NATURE—THE VALOUR OF JOSEPH—HE PASSES THE BREACH—RETREATS NOT WITHOUT LOSS—BALLIES—REPULSES THE ENEMY—PERFORMS VARIOUS FEATS OF STRATEGY—FATE PROVES PERVERSELY ADVERSE.

JOEY PIKE, when last we left him, was not in exactly the most agreeable situation in the world. As we have informed the reader, receiving a blow between the eyes, he fell flat upon his back, and exactly in the same position in which he had tumbled did he lie for the space of at least half-an-hour. Whether he felt it comfortable or uncomfortable, whether he considered himself in a graceful attitude, or was without the power of putting himself in an attitude at all, matters very little to this book. There he lay, reader, that is a *constant*, and as such it is enough for you, I, or Mr. Babbage. When he did get up, however, his head turned round, his eyes saw all manner of colours, and he cried out, "Ah, vaery shocking, vaery shocking indeed;" and then with a step of slow and wounded dignity, he walked towards the stile, which led past the house of Mrs. Scapulary into the village of Outrun.

When he approached it the hour was not far from midnight, but it was bright and clear, the sky lustrous with many lights, and the memory of evening and the hope of morning shining from the west and east, and meeting in faint radiance overhead. But by that gentle twilight of a period of the year which owns no absolute darkness, the astounded eyes of Joey Pike beheld a huge male form seated upon the top of the wall. His active imagination instantly took hold of it, and moulded it into every frightful shape. The church-yard was near the foul pool in which Jerry Tripe had nearly perished, and in which a drunken and egregious poacher had actually sunk never to rise again, was close at hand; so that Joey had every probability on his side when he conceived that it must be a ghost or a goblin; ay, even perhaps a Hobgoblin, or, as it should properly be called, a *hoppgoblin* or *empusa*, which we take to be the most awful and horrible of all sorts of goblins. Conceive, dear reader, what a terrible and diabolical spirit it must be which, not content with inflicting its malicious torments on the human race in a calm and quiet manner upon two legs, shows its rejoicing in the dreadful task assigned to it, by skipping and hopping, as if in very mockery of the misery it causes. Can any thing be more fiendish than the very definition of the Latin lexicographers—"a spirit that hops upon one leg and changes itself into many shapes!" but he it remarked that in all its shapes it still hops upon one leg, as if the

other had been carried away in battle, for such is an absolute condition of the existence of an empusa or hopgoblin, as the root itself shows—*ἑν ἑνός*! It cannot do otherwise—it is its very nature to hop, as Wallis and Junius clearly show; and although Hobbes, with a natural predilection for the first half of his own name, would have us believe that the word ought to be *hobgoblin*, because hob is the short for robin; and others contend that the hobgoblin is merely one of the *lares*, or household gods that sit down at the *hob* with us, yet it seems to me clearly established by Cœlius Rodiginus, that the empusa was a distinct sort of hopping demon of Protean powers and malicious character, so that Joey Pike had the best authority in the world for being excessively frightened at the spectre which he beheld, as soon as ever he convinced himself that it was a hopgoblin.

Nevertheless, as we have shown upon more than one occasion, Joey Pike was a true hero. He was one of those men who, seeing danger before him and knowing its extent, calmly calculate the object to be obtained by confronting it, and if it be worthy, hesitate not to undertake the enterprise. Nay more, there was something in the very presence of danger itself which elevated and excited his whole mind—his busy imagination was all in a flame with glory; where glory was to be obtained where would Joey Pike not have gone? One of Lever's Irishmen, one of James's men in armour, the Duke of Wellington in his military capacity, Theseus, Hercules, Apollo himself, when in his prime he shot the great sea serpent, was nothing to Joey Pike when animated with the desire of high renown. On the present occasion, however, his object was only to go to bed. No fame could he acquire by encountering a hobgoblin on the top of a stile; there were no eyes to look upon him but those of the stars, who never report for the newspapers. If he fell he was likely to fall unknown, if he triumphed his achievement must be unrecorded. While he yet hesitated the voice of the apparition was heard exclaiming in a discontented tone, "I say, Bill, this is devilish dull work! I should think she won't come to-night;" and thereupon up started another goblin from the grass, and replied, "I should think not."

These awful words decided Joey Pike, who happening to be under one of the trees, saw without being seen, and gliding back with many a delicate and skilful bend, and with attitudes which only wanted a Phidias or a Praxiteles to be transferred to stone or ivory, and enchant a hundred ages, the renowned Joey retreated from the scene of ghostly conference, and made up his mind to a bed under a chesnut tree. How he slept and what dreams he dreamt we must leave to the vivid imagination of the reader. Suffice it, that he put a full mile between himself and the goblins before he lay down to rest, and that he woke early on the following morning. Finding that the wind during the night had made somewhat free with his drapery, and exposed his delicate ancle, he blushed and simpered in the character of Miss Brochet, and then betook himself to a path which led across the park towards another stile on the opposite side. He reached that stile in safety, mounted the first and second stone, and had his foot upon the top of



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But a bucket descending her pursuers

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the wall, but alas near him there was one of those little dells, such as the yellow-haired laddie, famous in song, used to frequent, and where, as we are told, "the hawthorn trees grow;" and just as he had reached the aim of his desires, which at that moment was the top of the wall, a loud voice shouted out from beneath the green branches, "Hallo, Harry, hallo, there she goes. Split my wig, there she goes!"

Notwithstanding the adjuration of the elegant speaker, Joey did not stop to dis sever his suppositious hair, but descending rapidly on the other side of the wall, ran along the road as if three mad bulls were behind him. With a step like light he darted on, comparing himself as he went to Camilla and all the goddesses and nymphs who were ravished or not ravished by those rude gentlemen in days of yore, and seeing the gate open he darted in, well knowing that the distance of only two meadows lay between him and a wild common. Behind him, however, came the sound of running feet, and though Joey banged the gate in the face of his pursuers, they first pattered upon the hard road, and then sounded upon the soft turf. On sped Joey towards the opposite gate, distancing his followers by his agility, and taking pleasure as a stag is said to do, in his flight from the chace. He reached the gate in safety, pulled back the sneck, but in vain, it was padlocked by a foul piece of semicircular iron. There was no avoiding it, Joey laid his left hand on the top rail and vaulted. Unhappily the gate post caught his muslin drapery, in the most lamentable position in the world. But happily the force and velocity of his leap was such that cotton threads and linen tape gave way, the dress rent, the horse-hair bustle was torn off, and shorn of his fair proportions, Joey trod with additional lightness the velvet mead beyond.

"The devil's in the girl," cried one of the viscount's gamekeepers, taking a long run and clearing the gate likewise, but Joey paused not to listen or reply. On, on he flew; while his two pursuers, with some fifty yards between the pairs, panted upon his footsteps. The second gate was open, a third gave him exit upon the common; but alas, how often does it happen, that from some slight miscalculation, the thing we seek most ardently proves our bane. The common was open, it is true, but it was covered with furze bushes. Joey, in his breeches, might have won the day, but in petticoats the odds were against him. Each bramble, each thorn, each tuft of gorse, snatched at his drapery, impeded his progress, and often made him stumble. The first of his pursuers was coming rapidly up, when, lo, an ass appeared, and snatching up a stick which lay near, Joey sprang on the donkey's back. "Europa rode a bull, he said, why not Miss Brochet on a jackass?" But the sturdy quadruped refused to move. One, two, three blows sounded like a boy's drum-stick on a broken drum. The first gamekeeper was close behind, he was stretching forth his hand to seize the fugitive, when a fourth blow descended thundering on the flank; up went the donkey's heels, three of the pursuer's grinders flew into the air, and on went Miss Brochet with her steed, braying and kicking, and sticking out his tail, as if in mockery of the discomfited gamekeeper. While the latter stood coughing and spitting, and holding his jaw, his companion

came up, said a few words of comfort, and resumed the chase ; but Miss Brochet, mounted on her Bucephalus, now set pursuit at defiance. Seated on the croup of the donkey, waving her stick over her head, snapping her fingers in the air, and exclaiming, "Ah, you catch me when you shall can ;" she dashed across the common, sticking out her left foot with ineffable grace, and urging on her quadruped with dexterous blows upon every tender part, in a manner that might have excited the admiring envy of any donkey-driver of Brighton or of Ems, that purgatory of asses. Soon her last pursuer was forced to abandon the chase, and while he remained panting and blowing, and holding his heaving sides, she cantered on for at least three miles across the extensive moors, which we have more than once before mentioned.

Finding herself at length in safety, the young lady permitted her steed to relax its speed, and then dismounting with a graceful spring, she followed the ordinary course of mankind towards all that serve them, by giving the friend who had aided her at such a terrible pinch, a severe whack with the stick, and sending him back from whence he came.

What to do next, became Joey Pike's immediate consideration, and feeling a sort of misgiving as to the neighbourhood of Outrum Castle, though it was by this time well nigh four miles off, he again took to his legs, and sometimes running with a graceful trip, sometimes walking with a stately step, proceeded two miles farther, taking the liberty of gathering some early fruit out of a garden as he went, to supply the cravings of a very importunate guest who had taken possession of his stomach. He next betook himself to a sandpit, and under a shady bank passed several comfortable hours, partly in a quiet dose, partly in meditative dreams, in the course of which he compared himself to every heroine who had been a wanderer and an outcast, from the time of Eve down to his own day. So thoroughly had he convinced himself that he was not only outraged and persecuted, but absolutely a woman, that he had well nigh given way to a fit of hysterics, for the sole purpose of proving his sex.

At length about three o'clock or thereabouts, he took a path which led both towards the dwelling of Widow Bain and Mr. Longshanks, and determined to require hospitality at one or the other of those hospitable gates, he was hesitating which of the two he should seek, when his whole plans and purposes were changed by the sudden apparition of a man in drab breeches and gaiters. To have seen him, one who knew not the secret workings of his mind, would have supposed that Joey Pike had suddenly lost his senses, for down he fell flat on his belly, behind the bushes, making it seem as if the earth had swallowed him ; and then, as he lay, without ever raising himself so as to be seen, he writhed and wriggled about from bush to bush, and tree to tree, and gap to gap, now dropping down a bank, as if it had given way beneath his feet, now gliding behind the boll of an oak, now skulking into a hollow dell, but still advancing and peering out every minute with an eagerness, a zeal, and indefatigable activity, which was won-





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Joey entrapped

derful and admirable. It would delight the reader to hear all the manœuvres that he went through during the next four hours, but it is impossible for the tongue or pen of man to describe all the feats that he performed in the gymnastic art; ay, and it would be impossible, too, for any imagination to conceive the attitudes he fell into, or the devices which he put in practice. That he was watching something was very evident; and it was not till the sky became dusk again that, joyfully clapping his hands, he exclaimed, "I have it now!" and off he ran with all his speed to the house of Mr. Longshanks.

Rueful and dark was Joey's countenance when he heard that the worthy surgeon had gone forth to dinner at Rotundity Court; but he was one whom no difficulties discouraged, no obstacles could appal, and off he set as hard as he could go in that direction. "I will triumph over Fate," cried Joey, while he walked for six miles as if he had a bet with the goddess. In the road under the park-pailing of Rotundity Court, however, he suddenly paused, and with proper foresight, looked on before him. He saw two men, even in that dark and dismal hour, hanging about the gate; there was a certain air and look about them, though he could see not a feature of their faces, which Joey loved not. It was a thieftaker-ish air, a Bow-street-officer-ish look, and Joey Pike stopped short. Back again he crept, with his face still to the foe, to make sure he was not observed, like the representative of a wild Indian at a minor theatre; and then when he reached the far end of the enclosure he vaulted over the pailing and lighted within the grounds. When he was there, however, new difficulties beset him; the shrubberies were deep and intricate, the paths tortuous and studiously meandering; he had well nigh plunged into a piece of water, he ran his head against a summer-house, he tumbled over an ancient ruin of a fortnight old. At length, however, he issued forth upon a fair open lawn, and instantly perceived the house before him, with all the windows open, and lights and music and merry laughter streaming out upon the air. With ecstatic joy and relief of mind, Joey tossed back his head, threw forward his chest, extended his two hands like an opera singer about to begin a duet, and then bounded up with the step of a Cerito.

Alas, for the hapless human race, what accidents do man environ! As he descended on one foot his toe seemed to touch a spring-board, a loud and sudden click was heard, a terrible blow broke his shin and pinched his calf, and graceful Joey Pike found himself caught in an instrument absurdly called "a *humane* mantrap." Loud and pitifully did he howl, out rushed a number of persons from the house, and to his surprise, joy, and consolation, the two first faces he beheld were those of Harry Worrel and the Chevalier de Lunatico. Now having restored him to the bosom of his friends, we shall leave Joey Pike to their tender attentions, and proceed to gather the rest of our flock together.

CHAPTER XLV.

Laura in her prison—THE RETURN OF THE MADMAN—THEIR FLIGHT—
GLIMPSES OF A SAD STORY—LAURA'S ESCAPE.

DID you ever, reader, when you were a child, get into an empty room, before you had learnt the art and mystery of turning a lock, bang the door to, and fancy you should never get out again? Of all the horrors that can ever rush into the human mind, the imaginations that then rise up in the breast of infancy are by far the most terrible. With fancy at its height, and a whole world untried, yawning like a vast cavern before it, the agony of terrible uncertainty at that moment is worse than all the positive pains and dangers that befall us in after life. Rarely—very rarely, do we ever in mature years meet with an hour so fearful as that.

Laura, however, in the close prison to which she was now confined—shut in by a madman, who was likely to forget her the next moment—at a distance from the inhabited part of the house—without a single soul knowing what had become of her, and every probability against their seeking her in that direction—endured to the full all the terrors of childhood, and gave herself up to utter despair. Whenever fancy brought a sound to her ear, (for none in reality reached her the whole day,) she raised her voice, and cried aloud for help; but no one came; and she saw the darkening of the day with her bright eyes dim with tears. Seating herself in a corner of the room, she gave way to the torrent, and wept violently, while night crept on, and all was darkness. She had continued thus, with her face buried in her hands, for nearly an hour, when she suddenly heard a sound, and started up. Before she could cry out the key turned in the lock, and the door opened. Although it flashed upon her mind immediately that it was but the madman who had returned, yet, such are the gradations of suffering, that the presence of him, from whom she had fled in terror, came now as a blessed relief.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "I thought you had forgotten me!" And the accents of joy in which she spoke seemed to touch the unhappy man's heart: for it does seldom happen that the earthquake which overthrows the temple of reason, lays the whole structure in such utter ruin but that some passages, however tortuous and narrow, still remain, by which human feeling can penetrate even to the innermost shrine.

"Forgotten you!" he said; "and are you glad I have come? Ha, ha! that is strange; for now all the children fly from and hoot me; the very urchins whose heads I used to pat, look terrified if they see me. I, who used never to come home without a look of joy, and

satisfaction from the eyes that I loved best :” and down he sat upon the floor, and placing his back against the door, fell into a sort of stupor of meditation, with his hands clasped on his knees, and his head drooping till his forehead almost rested on them.

For a short time Laura waited patiently to see the result, fearful of exciting him to rage. She could see him distinctly as he sat, for the darkness had come so gradually upon her eyes that the faint remaining light of the summer night sufficed to give her a general view of every thing around. At length, however, she spoke to, and tried to soothe him. She besought him to let her go: with that divining spirit, which exists more or less in the bosom of almost all women, she felt that his enmity had been somehow excited by the very people who kept her there, and she expressed her detestation of them, her eagerness to escape, her anxiety to return to her father, in language which she thought the most calculated to touch and affect her strange companion. But the ear of the mind seemed stopped. Not a word did he utter in reply; not a movement took place in his limbs; so still, so motionless he sat, one might have thought it was some melancholy statue, and not a living thing. More than once she made the same attempt in vain. At length, however, a few minutes after the castle clock had struck ten, Laura, convincing herself that he had fallen asleep, determined to make an effort to pass him quietly, and escape by the door. Advancing with a noiseless step, she had come within a single yard of the place where he sat, when, starting up with a wild laugh, he caught her by the wrist, exclaiming:—

“Poor mouse! so you thought to get out of the trap! But you and I will escape together. You want to run away from them, do you? Well, you shall run far enough; for I will not leave you till you have gone five hundred miles; far, far over the sea, where *he* can never see you again, and then he'll marry *her* you know, and all will be right. Come along, come along;” and dragging her out through the door, by the wrist, he led her through another, which opened out into a sort of paved alley, which ran from the back of the castle to the stable-yard. With a degree of cunning and caution far beyond what might be expected even from a person in their senses, he paused and looked round at every step, listened for every sound, and at the same time kept whispering to Laura:—“Not a word!—not a word!—not a word!”

She, on her part, listened and looked around with equal anxiety, hopeful of finding some means of deliverance, but it was all in vain that she did so. Distant sounds, indeed, she heard, coming apparently from the servants' hall, but they were too far off to give her any assurance of obtaining assistance, even if she raised her own voice to cry for help; and gradually her wild companion drew her away from the house, and into the park.

“Ha, ha, ha!” he cried, when they were actually under the first clump of trees: “now we are free!—now we are free! Go on before me; we will walk a hundred miles to-night. But if you attempt to run away, woe be to you!”

Thus, on they went till, half-way across the park, Laura suddenly perceived a female figure, under the trees. An exclamation of joy burst from her lips; but the madman cried, in a furious tone:—

“If you try to run a step, or say a word, I will knock you to pieces in an instant!” and almost at the same moment, levelling a blow at the person she had seen, and who had taken a step or two towards them, he struck whoever it was to the earth, exclaiming:—

“I have killed her! That is another of his women, and I will kill them all except you—except you; and you I’ll marry myself!”

Poor Laura, however, could bear no more, and as he spoke, exhausted with hunger, fatigue, agitation and terror, she sunk fainting down upon the path before him.

How long she remained in this state she could not tell, but she was at length aroused, as if by a sudden shake, and on languidly opening her eyes she found herself borne along, in the madman’s arms, under the park-wall of Outrun Castle, from the top of which, to say the truth he had just leaped, having found the stile guarded, and the gate shut.

“Oh, let me go!—let me go!” cried Laura. “I will walk—indeed I will.”

“You can’t walk, poor lamb!” he replied in a gentle tone. “Besides, the butchers are after you. I can carry you—I can carry you. I have grown so strong I could carry the world. I pulled the iron bar out of the window of the prison as if it had been a sapling twig!”

“I can walk, indeed,” said Laura; “and I will walk, too, if you will let me.” And after some persuasion she induced him to set her down, and suffer her to walk along by his side, though he held her tight by the wrist as they went.

His pace was painfully irregular to his fair companion; sometimes slow and thoughtful, sometimes so rapid that she could scarcely keep up with him; and thus they had passed the end of the park wall about half-a-mile when the day began to dawn. To Laura those faint grey streaks were a most joyful sight; but they seemed to fill the madman with terror.

“There is day!” he cried, “there is day! We must hide ourselves, or they will catch us; and then they will hang me, and marry you to him. That will be very terrible, you know. Here—here’s a place where we can hide, and nobody will find us.”

In that part of the country, as you know very well, dear reader, it is a common custom to cut out a sort of lime-kiln in any chalky bank, excavating the furnace in the mass of chalk, with an aperture at the top, and the entrance door, supported by brickwork, at the side of the road. The place to which the madman pointed was a large kiln of this kind, apparently long disused, but there was one extraordinary fact about it, which was, that the iron doorway had been left hanging on its rusty hinges, even in England, a country where every body thinks he has a right to take the property of his neighbour, provided he can do so undetected. Into this strange and miserable abode the madman forced Laura to enter, notwithstanding her entreaties and remonstrances; and, following her in himself, he drew the door to after

them. When this was accomplished, his mind seemed relieved from a part of the terrors which daylight had apparently brought with it, and sitting down he laughed gaily, saying :—

“Here, we can be comfortable.”

As the daylight increased, he gazed eagerly and often in his fair companion's face; and, whether it was one of the strange variations of madness, or that the sight of her beauty soothed and calmed him, he fell into a gentler mood than he had hitherto displayed, and after one of these fits of gazing bent down his head and wept profusely. Laura thought that it was a happy moment, and she strove to persuade him to let her go.

“You seem a kind-hearted man,” she said: “Oh, do let me return to my father. Think what a terrible thing it must be for him not to know what has become of me, and to be anxious every moment of his life about me.”

“Ay, I know—I know,” cried the man, in a sad and solemn tone. “Do you tell me what it is to be anxious every moment about a daughter? Don't you know who I am? Don't you know the whole story?”

“No, indeed,” replied Laura, alarmed at the knitting of his brows, and the tone in which he spoke; “no, indeed I do not know. What has happened to you?”

“I will tell you—I will tell you,” he answered. “I was a very happy man once, a very happy man, indeed. I had just enough to live upon, and a wife that I loved better than any thing on earth, except my daughter, and a daughter that I loved better than any thing in earth or in heaven.—Never you love your daughter too much, it's a sin and a folly.—I loved nothing but those two, they were all the world to me, and when I lost them there was nothing left for me to love at all.”

“Oh, dear,” said Laura, “I am very sorry for you.”

“Are you?” said the man. “That's kind of you—that's very kind. You are the only person that's been very sorry for me for a hundred years.”

He paused for a minute or two, as if in thought, and Laura asked :—

“Did they both die, then?”

“No, no,” cried the man; “I wish they had—I wish they had, and I too; that would have been pleasant. No, they didn't both die; my wife, she died, but she was a long while ill; she that was so pretty, she withered away, day by day, but she was pretty and dear to the last. Poor thing! God took her, and I was ungrateful. I thought I should have gone mad when she died, but then I had my daughter, and all the love that had been her mother's came to her—it was her right, you know; it was the only thing her mother had to leave her—a poor inheritance, God wot—but yet a father's love is something. Ay, but then came the worst time of all. I saw the girl was unhappy, and I thought it was for her mother, and I tried to comfort her; and I would look so cheerful you cannot think, when my very heart was breaking.—Ay, that's what it is that makes men go mad, looking happy and speaking gaily when they have got the grave in their heart.

But it doesn't matter—it's all the same thing. Did you ever read the Bible?"

"To be sure I have," replied Laura.

"Well, then," continued her companion, "do you remember the story of the rich man and the poor one, and how the rich one took the poor one's ewe lamb, that lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter; and what David said when he heard it?—Ha, ha! this foul monster comforts himself in his wickedness, and thinks himself safe, because he lives in a fine castle, and because the father, whose child he wronged, seems too pitiful in his eyes to reach him; but I say with David, 'As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die.'—Ay, I will tear his heart in pieces, as I tore the fowl.—But what makes you turn so white? I will not hurt you. You abhor him, too, don't you?"

"Oh, that I do," replied Laura, earnestly. Although she did not comprehend the whole of the man's story, yet the facts came glimmering through the obscurity of his wild speech, and showed her that wrongs as well as sorrows had driven him mad. "Oh, that I do," she replied; "but it was not fear that made me turn pale, but I am faint from fatigue, and with hunger, too, for I have not tasted any thing since ten o'clock yesterday morning."

The man put his two hands to his head, exclaiming:—

"Not tasted any thing! How's that—how's that? You're a good girl, and you're sorry for me, and abhor him as I hate him. Oh, I'll get you a nice breakfast; you shall have sweet water-cresses from the brook. I know where it runs. You shall have them directly.—Nobody can call that stealing. I'll go and fetch them—I'll go and fetch them," and away he darted. No thought had he to shut or fasten the door of the kiln. Indeed he could not have made it secure, for it was without either lock or bolt, and the moment he was gone, Laura started up with a trembling step and approached it. Her heart beat wildly, the prospect of liberty was before her, and yet she had scarcely strength to make use of the opportunity. She paused a moment, hesitating and calculating how far the madman would have to go. She had seen no brook as they had passed along, so that she could not even divine the distance; but, at all events, she determined to make the attempt. By this time there must be people near, she thought, who would hear her cries, and aid her—husbandmen labouring in the fields, or going to their work, and after waiting for about two minutes, she bent down and crept through the narrow door. The next moment she stood in the open road, and gazed to the right and left. No human being was to be seen, and climbing up a little path, which seemed to have been made in former days by the frequent steps of the lime-burners, she reached the top of the bank and once more looked around. Not a soul was near, but she heard some one whistling lightly in the distance, and, looking in that direction, she saw the spire of a little church. It was a blessed sight to her at that moment, and darting across the corner of a fallow field that lay before her, she reached a path which wound away in the direction of the village.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MADemoISELLE BROCHET FALLS OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN INTO THE FIRE—
HOW TO MYSTIFY A JUSTICE—PRISON RECREATIONS—JOEY'S DISCOVERIES—
A PROPOSAL.

JONES the curate, Mr. Alderman Rotundity, Mr. Deputy Popeseye, three or four young squires, and one or two country justices, aided the Chevalier de Lunatico and Harry Worrel in seeing what was the matter; while the whole party of ladies, alarmed by the noise and the sudden exit of the gentlemen, remained within, ready to scream or faint as the case might be; and Miss Rotundity, who was really not courageous notwithstanding her scientific pursuits, looked with tender confidence at the legs of the mastodon, as a place of retreat in case of danger.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" cried Mademoiselle Brochet; "how happy I was to see everybody. Meester Worrell, I vairy glad you come; do *aidez* me out of dis trap. I have got one vairy uncoamfortable situation. Ah, chevalier! *mon cher* chevalier! I be excessively pinch."

"Why, goodness me!" cried Mr. Rotundity, "this is the young lady who brought me news of your pretty daughter, Longmore. But how came you here, ma'amselle? But let me set you free;" and putting his foot upon the spring of the trap, Mr. Rotundity exclaimed—"Remove *fera monstra!*" and Joey Pike skipped out of the trap delighted.

"Yees," cried Miss Brochet, "yees, my cher Rotundity, I come tell you of pretty Miss Laura—I promise to come again to-night. But you see I have been persecuted—I have run, torn my gown, scratch my beautiful leg, and undertaken all manner of distress."

"Why, bless me!" cried young Jones the curate, holding a light close to Miss Brochet's face, "you seem, ma'am, to have got a marvellous stiff beard for a young lady. Methinks you have forgot to shave yourself this morning."

"Ah! pretty woman vil sometimes have de light, delicate moustache," replied Miss Brochet, blushing deeply.

"Yes; but here's beard as well as moustache," replied the curate, looking through his spectacles. "Why, alderman, this is a man dressed up in woman's clothes! If his hair were not flaxen his chin would be like a blacking-brush."

The Chevalier de Lunatico now perceived that further concealment, at least as far as sex, was all in vain; and, with the usual decision and promptitude which he displayed, he stepped forward, saying—

"Hush, my good sir, to use a term that you understand, being connected with your profession, there is more upon the cards than you

know of. You had better go home to your wife, and prepare for the journey you have got to take. My dear alderman," he continued, while young Jones slunk away, "this lady, as your clerical friend has observed, is a gentleman: it is my servant, in short, whom I sent down here for the express purpose of making discoveries in regard to fair Laura Longmore and other matters."

"Ay," cried rash Joey Pike, "and discoveries enough I have made. I will relate them all *organo*; but the first disclosure shall be of myself," and off he pulled cap, bonnet, and wig, exposing to the eyes of admiring spectators the graceful head of Joey Pike issuing out of a delicate French collar and pelerine.

Rash Joey! rash Joey! to what perils do'st thou expose thyself! Hadst thou remained enveloped in false curls, and lace, and silk, though all might detect thee by thy beard for a man, no one would have discovered what a man thou art. There was no necessity for it either, Joey; for the chevalier's cautious, but well-timed, acknowledgment of thee saved thee from all responsibility. It was an act of needless candour, of unnecessary generosity, towards thine opponents. Thou must be a Tory, Joey Pike; thou must be a Tory. I wonder thou are not in the cabinet!

The moment hat and wig were gone, a young squireling exclaimed—

"Why, hang it—upon my honour it's Joey Pike, the waiter at the Half Moon!"

"He's soon going to be waiter at the whole one," said the Chevalier de Lunatico. "But I think we had better bring him into the house, and hear something of the wonderful discoveries he has made; and, besides, he seems exhausted, torn, and in a very lamentable condition. I know my friend the alderman has too much kindness of heart to refuse him rest and refreshment under such circumstances."

"Assuredly, assuredly," cried Alderman Rotundity. "*Hoc maxime officii est, ut quisque maxime opis indigeat, ita ei potissimum opitulari.*"

"But," said one of those gentlemen called justices of peace, whose name, by the way, is a sad misnomer, as their operations, nine times out of ten, in their beginning, their course, and their result, have nothing to do with peace in the world—"but, Mr. Alderman Rotundity, I fear this here is a bad business; for that there fellow, Joey Pike, has a warrant out against him for the murder of old Scapulary; and the magistrate's pocket-book says, that, in a case of felony, every one becomes a constable, and ought to take the villain up."

"I deny that," said young Jones the curate, who by this time had crept back again to the party, and could not resist the spirit of hoax that was in him—"I deny that, Mr. Puddenstream; for how can a magistrate become a constable, which is an inferior office? No, my dear sir, you remain always a justice of peace, and have no right to take any cognizance whatsoever of the greatest felon in all the world, even if he had cut your own throat the moment before, unless he be brought before you on information on oath. That's the law, I take it, alderman. Blackstone does indeed say that in certain cases, such as

the present, every man becomes a constable; but that means every common man, of course: and very inconvenient it sometimes is; for where there are only two people present, a felon and another man, as the felon becomes a constable too, they have mutually to take up each other; and if the felon happens to be the strongest, he, of course, carries the day. It's the law of the land, I can assure you, chevalier."

"I dare say it is," replied the chevalier, "for it sounds very like nonsense; and I have remarked a tendency that way in some of your laws before."

Mr. Jones held his tongue; for he found it less pleasant to hoax the chevalier than any other person he had met for a long while, and the clear, grey, sarcastic twinkle of the great diplomatist's eye gave warning that he was always ready to return shot for shot.

"Well, gentlemen," continued the chevalier, "as it is now night, and the moon is not yet up, we cannot see clearly into the matter here, and therefore had better, perhaps, go in. We shall soon hear my friend Joey's account of himself, and then we can deal with the matter as may be thought fit."

"As to that matter," said a voice close by, "I shall deal with un first," and at the same time a great, broad hand grasped Miss Brochet's arm. "We have got a warrant against thee, my dear; so you mun come along with we."

"Stay, stay," said the chevalier.

"Stay, stay," said Harry Worrell.

"No I woan't," said the constable. "What should I stay for, master?"

"Because you are bound to take him before the nearest magistrate," replied Harry Worrell, "and there are three here present."

"Is that the law?" asked the learned constable with a broad stare. "I thought I had to take un to gaol."

"Oh, it's the law, it's the law," cried Mr. Jones, who was anxious to hear all that Joey Pike had to say; and having removed into the dining-room of Rotundity Court, the magistrates and their friends took up their position on one side of the table, while Joey and the constable appeared on the other.

"Give him a chair," said Mr. Longmore. "By standing too long upright the muscular fibre becomes contracted, the atoms are pressed one upon the other, a derangement of the relative positions take place, the poles become inverted, or, at all events, dislocated, and those changes are produced in the animal economy which ultimately lead to the unnatural and unnecessary consequences of sickness and death."

"Give him a slice of venison and a glass of wine," said Mr. Deputy Popeseye. "Keep a good heart, young man, and fill your belly whenever you can. That's the way both to have a long life and a merry one. My good friend the chevalier here would not stand by you, I'm sure, if you had committed a murder; so we'll see you taken care of, and you shan't want for meat and drink in the prison if I have any say in the matter."

"It's all nonsense together," said Harry Worrell, "there's nobody in"

the whole county, from the coroner down to the cow-keeper, who suspects Joey of any thing like murder ; and here the chevalier and I can prove that he was in quite a different place at the time that this act was committed."

"That has nothing whatever to do with it, I tell ye," cried Justice Puddenstream. "That there man was murdered, that's clear enough ; this here man's accused of it, that's clear enough ; and so he must go to prison."

"Pray how long must he stay ?" said the chevalier.

"Why, I can't tell that," replied Justice Puddenstream ; "maybe six weeks or more. I forget when the 'sizes are."

"And pray how will he amuse himself ?" said the chevalier.

"Why, he may walk about the yard with the other felons," said the justice, "and he may write his name upon the wall, and all that."

"And if he is found innocent," said the chevalier, "the country, of course, makes him a large compensation for long imprisonment and six weeks' condemnation to the society of felons."

"Pooh—nonsense !" cried Mr. Puddenstream ; "he may think himself devilish well off he isn't tucked up ; and the judge will tell him when he quits the court that he must look upon himself as fortunate in the issue of the trial, and that the warning he has received ought to have a great effect on his future life and conversation."

"So that, in short, he will go out of court an innocent man, having suffered the punishment you inflict upon various serious offences, though he had done nothing to merit it, having had his morals contaminated by association with criminals, and his reputation blasted by the insinuations of his judge ?"

"Something like it, I am afraid," said Mr. Alderman Rotundity. "Judges will make awkward speeches, that they had better let alone, as well as other men. '*Nemo omnibus horis sapit.*'"

"But what's all that to us ? what's all that to us ?" cried Mr. Puddenstream. "We've nothing to do with all that. All that we've got to do is, to commit a man when he's brought before us for a felony, to punish poachers, and fine fellows five shillings for being drunk. That's a magistrate's business, and plenty of it there is too."

"May I ask," said the chevalier in an insinuating tone, "who it is that appoints the magistrates in this county ?"

"The Lord Lieutenant to be sure," replied the justice. "Who should appoint them but the Lord Lieutenant ? He asked me particularly to take that onerous and responsible office, as he called it, upon myself."

"He was sure you would do honour to the bench," said the chevalier ; "and so much do I respect him, that I will beg you to present him with this little note of invitation the first time you see him. If the people in my country displayed as much care and discrimination in selecting their magistrates there, we should not be so riotous a crew as we are I dare say."

"Thanky, sir ; thanky," said the justice, pocketting the billet ; "and now we had better commit this fellow."

"Not till you've heard him I suppose, and the charge too," said the chevalier.

"No, no; let us hear him, let us hear him," cried some of the other magistrates. "What do you charge him with, constable?"

"Why, as to charging un," replied the constable, "that's no business of mine you know. He's been charged enoff already I fancy. I wash my hands o' that. I was sent to teak un where I could find un, not to charge him. Ye must manage that amongst ye; that's not my job."

This new difficulty might have turned to Joey's advantage, but Joey Pike, like Joey Hume, was smitten with an irresistible desire of distinguishing himself in oratory, and, like that distinguished impediment to all legislation, his oratory often got him into a scrape. By this time he was refreshed with meat and wine, and, rising with dignity, he floured his left hand, and laid his right upon his heart.

"I am charged," he said, "with murder. I own it."

"Oh," said Mr. Puddenstream, "he is charged with murder, and he owns it. That's quite enough I think. He pleads guilty—he stands committed."

"No, no, he does not," cries another magistrate; "he pleads no such thing. What he owned was, that he stood charged with murder."

"Do you call me a fool, sir?" said Mr. Puddenstream.

"I did not call you one, whatever I might think," replied the other magistrate; and how far this petty quarrel might have gone, nobody can tell; but Mr. Alderman Rotundity interposed, exclaiming—"Gentlemen, gentlemen, let us hear what the prisoner has to say."

"Oh, I will hear any thing," cried Puddenstream, "but I won't be called a fool."

"Well, now, Joey, speak," said the alderman. "You have stated the charge against yourself. Have you any thing to say against it?"

"Simply this, most learned alderman," replied Joey Pike—"that it is false, because it is impossible. First, it is morally impossible, because it is not in my nature to commit murder; secondly, it is physically impossible, because no man can be in two places at once. Then, again, it is false, because I did not do it; and, thirdly, it is false, because another did. Each of these assertions I can prove, *illustrissimi signori*, if you will only permit me to do so. In the first place, I have said it is not true, because it is impossible. Now, there are two honourable gentlemen here present, whose veracity is not to be doubted who can show that I was with them at the very time this murder must have been committed."

"I say, Joey," interposed the constable, "wawn't you seen a-coming out of the house just afore the murder wur found out?"

"No," replied Joey boldly, "for, I first found it out. It was a great discovery of my own—not so wonderful as some of Mr. Longmore's discoveries, but still no less true."

This was a very happy hit which made another friend upon the bench. Mr. Longmore bowed his head benignly, and Joey proceeded to tell the tale of his adventures on that morning, beginning with the words—"I had been fighting a duel!"

"Ha, ha, ha! he had been fighting a duel," cried Mr. Deputy Popeseye. "What a fool he must be if it's true! what a liar he must be if it's not! An awkward beast, a dilemma, Joey, with those two horns of its. Been fighting a duel! ha, ha!"

Worrel explained, and corroborated Joey's statement, which was also confirmed by the chevalier; but, nevertheless, as so frequently happens, Mr. Popeseye's laugh had greatly damaged Joey Pike's cause; and the magistrates having made up their minds to send him off to prison immediately, only listened to him farther in order to find matter for the confirmation of their own opinion.

"Well," said Mr. Puddenstream, "this is all very fine, gentlemen; but for my part I think an honest man always acts like an honest man; and I must say that to go about the country masquerading in petticoats in this manner is not like an honest man."

"Nor an honest woman either," said Sir Deputy Popeseye: "ha, ha, ha!"

"Pray, what did you do that for sir?" said Puddenstream.

"Joey Pike was agitated and overcome: he felt slightly hysterical; he could bear any thing but a laugh: the idea of being laughed at was to him worse than the thumb-screw or the rack. With a surprising effort, however, of mind and resolution, he swallowed the egg that was rising in his throat, and waving his hand, exclaimed—

"I see my case is prejudged. What did I come here for in petticoats, do you ask me? *Pour chercher la vérité*—and I have found it! Yes.—I have discovered the murderer: he who caused the *morto* of poor Toby Scapulary has developed himself to my *ojos*. I can prove it upon him—I can demonstrate that he is *coupable*, and not your *umilissimo servo*. Nay more, not only murder have I discovered but rhapsody. To me you owe—to me alone—the knowledge of where fair Laura Longmore is confined—"

"Ay, that's true enough," said Mr. Alderman Rotundity; "and I will take care that you shall have the credit of it, Joey. You shall not have to say—'*sic vos non vobis, &c.*'"

"I can tell you who are they whose brutal malice and *pervers complots* carried her off from her burning father's house," continued Joey Pike.

"Who, who?" demanded Harry Worrel, starting up with his fist clenched, as if he would have knocked down the phantom that Joey's words called up.

"Sit down, Harry, sit down," cried Mr. Longmore; "I will knock them down myself. Who, Joey—who?"

"The race of Outrun," screamed Joey, in a high soprano—"the race of Outrun—*sono i traditori.*"

Every man looked in his neighbour's face with horror and astonishment.

"Ah!" continued Joey Pike, shaking and mouthing like Mr. Macready in Richelieu—"ah! sad is my fate, and terrible my lot, to have to accuse my own kindred—to cast a stain upon my race—to blacken my own blood—that I, that I of all men should have to accuse the race of Outrun."

"The man's mad," said Mr. Longmore. "What the deuce have you to do with the race of Outrun, Joey?"

"Ay, there's the third great discovery," continued Joey, drawing forth a pocket handkerchief with a small edging of lace, and wiping his eyes, for he had moved himself to tears; "ay, there's the third discovery—I myself am a child of the race of Outrun. Was my mother ever known, oh, egregious Longmore? Did you ever hear my father's name, oh, potent Puddenstream? Is it in the register of your parish, grave and reverend Jones? No, no; Fitzurse is the name I ought to bear; and I can prove it too by proofs irrefragable. Was I not bred up in the house in early youth? Was not the daughter of that house long absent from her home? Did not she die in a dark, mysterious manner in the state chamber of Outrun Castle? Can any one behold her picture and my face and yet refrain to cry—there is the mother, there is the son? Besides, have I not a letter—ay, an intercepted letter from Jeremiah Tripe—him of the ruby nose—to Widow Scapulary, seeking the certificate of my mother's marriage?"

Joey spoke all this with an emotion and an emphasis that it is impossible to describe. He had studied his attitudes from the picture of Brutus condemning his sons; and he had nearly thrown his shoulder out of joint in the effort to stretch out his arm like a French Roman. It must be acknowledged, too, that the effect he produced was profound.

"This must be inquired into," said Mr. Longmore. "I recollect a good deal of strange matter about that time, and rumours that didn't do to talk about; but it must be inquired into."

"Let inquiry be made," replied Joey Pike; "it is all that I desire: I, for my own part, can prove all my assertions. I am willing at any moment to set my face by the side of that fair countenance and say, with the famed Prince of Denmark, 'Look here upon this picture, and on that.'"

"Yes," said Mr. Jones with a sly smile, "and the reply might be from the same author—'Hyperion to a Satyr.'"

"Then I have the letter," continued Joey Pike.

"Pray let me look at it," said the Chevalier de Lunatico.

"There, most respected knight," replied Joey, "I know you to be a *proo chevalier*, and I can trust to your discretion. Take, read, and mark it; you will see that he speaks of the marriage certificate—'The marriage certificate,' continued Joey reading from the letter, "'which your husband, defunk, always kepp in his grey breeches pocket. Poor man I wonder what always made him wear grey breeches:' and so do I," proceeded Joey; "but a fact's a fact—grey breeches he did wear, and in those breeches was deposited, besides the nether man of Scapulaire—"

"Joey, Joey," cried the chevalier, "you are getting into verse. But here is the undoubted fact," he continued as he took the letter and looked through the contents—"here is the undoubted fact of a marriage certificate being inquired after which this old man apparently used to carry always in his breeches pocket. But what is the link of connection between this letter and yourself, Joey?"

"Why he certainly was brought up at Outrun Castle," said Mr. Longmore, "and there were strange reports about that time."

"I was," said Joey, waving his hand gracefully and assuming the pathetic—"I was reputed to be what the people in London called a fondling, though heaven knows few are they who fondle them—an *ensang troavy*; or as the Spaniards, most poetically, call it a *Hijo de la piedra*, a son of the stone, for stony must be that father's heart who could thus expose a child. Such, however, I was reputed to be: some said even, and confidently affirmed, that I was related to old Scapulary himself; but still I was brought up in Outrun Castle, and did odd jobs for all men, till about twelve years ago, when applying for some information regarding my fate and history, and delicately hinting to the noble lord that I thought myself a greater man than cruel circumstances suffered to appear, his lordship reached his hand to a stag's horn in the great hall, and drawing down a horsewhip flanked me out of the chief door. Most indignantly I stalked away, resolved never to be beholden to that hand again, even for a penny roll, till I could claim it as a right. Little did I hope when I returned to Outrun Castle for the purpose of setting free Laura Longmore—little did I hope, I say, that I should find the proofs of those rights which I do now possess."

"But did you set her free?" exclaimed Mr. Longmore, more interested in the fate of his own progeny than in the ancestors of Joey Pike. "Did you set her free, Joey?"

"Alas, no!" answered Joey Pike, and the face of Harry Worrel—as when a schoolboy promised to be taken to fair or show, to sport or game with but the one condition, that the weather shall be fine, looks up with anxious eyes unto the cloudy sky, while the dull vapours drift along it thick, and sparrows chirp portentous, and he beholds a sudden rent in the gloomy canopy above, and forth pours the sun, brightening for a moment all the scene around, but instantly after the clouds close again, and all is darker than before, while the slow drops of rain begin to patter down—so was the countenance of Harry Worrel, illuminated for a moment by the bright rays of hope, but overshadowed again instantly by the reply of Joey, "Alas, no!" said Joey Pike, "I was frustrated. But to speak again of my proofs—"

"Well, well—but we have nothing to do with that," cried Brutus Puddenstream, who stuck to his point like a rusty weathercock, or an old Roman. "What we have to do is, to commit him. That's our business, I take it. You see, gentlemen, that there man is accused of the murder of old Scapulary; a warrant is out for his apprehension, and—"

"And we must remand him for further examination," said Mr. Longmore. "Here is but one suspicious circumstance that I can hear alleged against him; here is the testimony of two honourable gentlemen to set against that circumstance; here is the uniformly good character which the young man has borne, and to which the one half of the people here present can testify."

"Ay, he always was a good cretur," cried the constable. "We thought un a little light in t'—— t' no harm in un."

Joey Pike would rather have been committed a thousand times than have undergone such a speech ; but Mr. Longmore went on—" and I, as one of the magistrates here present, will not consent to a good and respectable young man being sent to the common prison, where he has no means of carrying on his observations, making his calculations, or any of those processes in which the human mind delights, till we have stronger proof against him than we have at present."

"No, no," cried several of the other gentlemen present ; "remand him, remand him."

Mr. Puddenstream found that he was in the minority ; but none of the family of the Puddenstreams ever yield with a good grace ; and he it said, that very often, in this world, they carry their point against the conviction and conscience of other people, simply by a dogged adherence to a wrong opinion. In this instance he made a strong fight of it ; and one would have thought that Joey Pike had murdered him himself, so eager was he to commit him. Even when the question was carried against him, and the prisoner was remanded, he declared that he cast the responsibility from his own shoulders, and held the other magistrates answerable for any consequences that might ensue. Joey, however, was not committed in spite of all he could say ; and Mr. Rotundity, ordering out his own phaeton, sent him off in custody of the constable, with a recommendation to have him treated well and tenderly.

"And now," continued the worthy alderman, "let us rejoin the ladies ; for we left them in most admired disorder, and doubtless they are in a dreadful state of anxiety to know all that has taken place."

"Oh dear, no," said Mr. Jones : "I looked in a minute ago, and they were quite comfortable, I can assure you. My fair friend, Miss Serpentaria, was descanting on the aitch bone of a Mastodon, and all the rest of the party were asleep, except the lady who took three glasses of curaçoa after her coffee, and she was counting up the ace of spades. She made four of it ; but what game she fancied herself playing at, I don't know."

"Why, where are you going to ride to to-night, my dear young friend ?" said Mr. Alderman Rotundity, to whom Harry Worrel had been speaking in a low voice. "I'll lend you a horse with a great deal of pleasure ; but——"

"It's not to be done, Harry," said Mr. Longmore. "I know what he's going to be about. He's going to set off for Outrun Castle, and there will be more blood spilt. Have I not promised you my daughter, Harry ? and that's enough. Leave me to find her."

"There's been very little blood spilt as yet, my dear sir, replied Harry Worrel : "for that young rascal, Fitzurse, is alive and well, and——"

Here the chevalier stepped in, not feeling particularly sure how Mr. Longmore's resolutions in favour of his friend might be affected by the news of Mr. Fitzurse's resuscitation. He therefore finished Harry Worrel's sentence, thus : "and Lord Outrun and his son, feeling very sure you would never consent to her marriage with the latter, when you discovered what a blackguard and a swindler he is, carried off

your daughter for the purpose of compelling her to wed him against your will and her own too."

"I'll prosecute them," cried Mr. Longmore—"I'll prosecute them for abduction. I'll call my new, wonderful discovery for blowing up a whole fleet with a pistol shot—I'll call it "Frederick Fitzurse" instead of "Longmore's infernal machine," as I intended to term it; and I'll burn down Outrun Castle with my patent magnifying, multiplying glass, which is exactly the same instrument wherewith Archimedes burned the fleet in the port of Syracuse."

"Well, at all events, wait till to-morrow morning," said the chevalier; "perhaps we may hear something of Laura by that time. I rather suspect, indeed, that we shall; but if not——"

"Why, then, let us all proceed against Outrun Castle in a body," cried Mr. Alderman Rotundity, who was in a state of some excitement,—"if we do not hear of the young lady by eight o'clock to-morrow, let us all march in battle array, summon the castle to surrender, and take it by storm."

"Agreed, agreed, agreed!" cried all parties present—"agreed, agreed, agreed!"

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE VISCOUNT SINKS INTO POETRY—THE HEIR'S RETURN—LITERARY FRIENDS—A RECOGNITION—THE POET—AND HIS AUDIENCE.

It was eight o'clock at night—generally a very jovial hour in Outrun Castle, and once more the viscount and Tom Hamilton were seated at dinner. The noble lord of the mansion, during the course of the day, as the reader well knows, had had his trials, to speak in the language of a widow who has buried three husbands; and he had been unusually desponding and low-spirited towards evening. Whether it was the effect of his encounter with the maids—a cook's revenge—the escape of Laura—or the ineffectual pursuit—or all, or any two or three together of these great movers to melancholy, of course we cannot tell; but the fact is so, that the right honourable peer, to use a very homely, but expressive country phrase, looked as sad as a wet hen. There was something cheering, however, in the sound of the dinner bell. He looked up from his toilet-table and smiled; the pimples of his face acquired a brighter hue, for they had been rather blue; and parodying the beautiful lines of our sweet Irish bard, he murmured to himself—

“That evening bell, that evening bell,
How many a tale its tinklings tell
Of soup and fish, and that sweet hour,
When it invites men to devour.

“What dinners I have ate before,
What dishes I shall eat no more;
And where they are gone to, who can tell,
Who hears that tinkling dinner bell.

“Tongue, turkey, *salmi*, *mayennoise*,
Veal casserole, and *a la braise*,
Though sweet the past, will do as well
To honour thee, sweet dinner bell.”

The reader will at once perceive that the viscount was by nature of a poetical temperament. He was, indeed, a flower which had been doomed to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air; but who can doubt that if the cultivating hand had been bestowed, his genius would have produced many as sweet and graceful a composition, many as strong and vigorous an effusion, as flows from the ruby point of Moore's bird-of-paradise feather—from the less soft, but no less

enchancing quills of Reade, Harvey, and Alfred Tennyson—or even those dulcet strains that distil amongst the blood and garbage that occupy the rest of his poetical and anatomical mind, from the steel pen of Mr. Coroner Wakley? We may be permitted to lament that his genius had not been fostered in this particular line, but nevertheless, he felt within himself that glow of satisfaction on the present occasion, which every poet feels, when he has committed a piece of verse; and although he had been rather depressed by the events of the morning, yet, as a poetical friend assured us one day, when he had just lost his wife, and written her epitaph, “his little muse consoled him.”

Thus, with an easy and a jaunty step, as easy and as jaunty as his corporation would suffer it to be, he descended to the drawing-room, where Tom Hamilton was already waiting and hungry; and they proceeded together into the chamber appropriated for the great pursuit of human life. Some fine trout were on the table, of Tom's catching; the soup was carrot, and inimitable; some of the especial Madeira accompanied the two; and the peer and his companion lingered in fond dalliance over these sweet pabula for the space of half an hour. As Jerry Tripe with one hand removed the soup, and turned it over to the footman behind, however, a rush of wheels was heard, and one of those vehicles classically denominated “a yellow,” which, like the tomb, seems destined at one time or another, to receive all the living, rushed past the windows of the dining-room, and stopped opposite the great doors.

“Why, who the devil's that, Tom?” exclaimed the viscount.

“It must be Fitzurse,” replied Tom Hamilton, sipping his Madeira. “Give me a patty, if you please, Mr. Tripe.”

“Nonsense,” cried the peer; “Freddy does not come to his funeral till to-morrow.”

But even as he spoke, a servant threw open the door, announcing Mr. Jonas Fitzurse; and in walked a personage in a mourning suit, with immense whiskers, and a quantity of hair of a very peculiar tint of black. Now every one knows that ladies, when they charge a gentleman to buy them some black silk—do not let the reader think that the writer is descending from the high and sublime style so befitting a work of this gravity, and approaching the limits of the dark kingdom of bathos, by entering into such details, for the matter is one of great importance—but when ladies do so, we say, they tell you that you must bring them either a blue black or a black black. Now the hair and whiskers of Mr. Jonas Fitzurse were neither the one nor the other. It was a purple black, and well it might be; for to keep the reader no longer in suspense, it was produced by Tyrian dye. So great was the change, however, which had been wrought in the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus Fitzurse, by a well-cut suit of respectable mourning, a white cravat, and dyed hair, that for a moment the father did not know his son, and began to be in a great fright lest he should really have some relations he had never heard of. A slight depression of Tom Hamilton's right eye-lid, however, and an elevation of the arched and speaking eyebrow, gave the peer the hint; and forgetting



Let us welcome

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that one or two servants were in the room, who were ignorant of their young master's resuscitation, he started up, exclaiming—

"Why, Freddy, my boy, you may well call yourself Jonas, for you must have been three days in a whale's belly, and got black in the process of digestion. But it's no good, the girl's gone—bolted, by jingo. However, we have set traps enough for her in the park. I don't think she's out of it yet; and if she isn't, we must catch her; so sit down and take some dinner—Bring some soup and some fish—Why, Freddy, you look like a gentleman!"

"I take it I do," drawled the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus; "but I knew you wanted a change, so I did make myself look like a gentleman, though none but blackguards do that now. But I've brought two men with me in the shay to walk at the funeral. I found them in the coffee-room of the 'Horse Shoe,' at Offington, talking literary—one's a poet, the other's a proser—so I asked them to my funeral, and promised them a bed and a bottle of claret."

"Bring them in, bring them in," cried the viscount, whose fault, it must be acknowledged, was not want of hospitality; "bring them in, Jerry; put chairs, knives and forks and glasses; we'll have a set-upon literary matters. I've known a great many men of letters in my day—once drank a cup of tea with Johnson, the only time I ever drank such stuff in my life—Bring them in, Jerry, I say."

"Come, come," cried his dutiful son, "don't you forget I'm your nephew, Jonas, old gentleman; your son Freddy's dead, remember. I know it to my cost, for I was kicked out of the Lord Mayor's ball for being alive again."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried the peer; "Freddy redivivus! That will never do—I had forgot though, by jingo—but it will do quite well. Jonas, my dear boy, you're my heir-at-law, so it doesn't matter. Are these your two friends?—Very happy to see you, gentlemen—very happy to see any friends of my nephew, Judas—Ha, ha, ha! Pray be seated. A very bad business, gentlemen—a very bad business, indeed; the loss of a son a terrible affair—but I always loved my nephew, Amos, quite as well; so that's one comfort, and we'll have a merry night of it—Ha, ha, ha!—won't we, Zacharias, my boy? Always right to keep one's spirits up, isn't it? Pray sit down, Mr. ———. I have not the honour of knowing your name."

"Winterton," replied the gentleman to whom he addressed himself; and who, as the reader may conceive, was staring with unmixed astonishment in the face of the viscount.

"And your friend?" continued Lord Outrun; "by what blessed designation may he be known, in the great moving mass of humanity?"

"My first name is Darius, sir," replied the other gentleman, who stood six feet one inch and a half, without his shoes, and was a little bald on the top of his head; "but if you will permit me, I will refrain, for a short period, from mentioning my cognomen, or second epithet."

"Certainly, certainly," cried the peer; "this Castle of Outrun, sir, is called 'Liberty-hall;' and though we do not write up here, as our friend Wilkes, did, '*Fais ce que tu voudra,*' it is only because the thing

is understood. Now, gentlemen, proceed, proceed ; our business at present is eating—after that comes drinking—then we will have literature if you please—and then, naturally, follows sleep. Ha, ha, ha!—isn't it so, Freddy?—Jeremiah I mean. My dear nephew, do instant justice to that *vol-au-vent*—take a glass of champagne, and show your friends how to make use of your uncle's house—Tom Hamilton, a glass of wine with you."

The two guests seemed so utterly confounded, that for several minutes they continued to eat and drink in silence, leaving the strange house they were in to follow its own strange courses. Mr. Winterton, indeed, who was a small, thin, fox-like man, close shaved, but very dark about the mazard, did ample justice to the viands set before him ; while Mr. Darius ——— seemed only gifted in the way of potation, and drank wine with each of his four companions, and then began again. In the meanwhile, Tom Hamilton seemed struck with an affection for Mr. Darius's countenance. He gazed at him, he stared at him—he stared at him, he gazed at him again ; till at length Mr. Darius began to raise his tall head still higher, to think it very extraordinary, to fume like a very elevated Mount Vesuvius, and to return Mr. Hamilton's examination, with what might have been a very strong inclination to knock him down. But just as such a tendency was growing upon him, and he was calculating the chances which Tom Hamilton's broad shoulders, long arms, and well-proportioned limbs afforded of paying any pugilistic debts with interest—the last-named gentleman suddenly started up, caught him by the hand, and, giving him an affectionate squeeze, exclaimed—

" Ah, my dear fellow, I am delighted to see you ; really it is so long since we met, that I quite forgot you. We are both a good deal changed since then—but don't say a word about it—I understand it all quite well ; we'll talk about it by-and-by ;" and eking out his speech with nods, and winks, and signs, Tom Hamilton resumed his seat with a well-pleased smile of recognition on his countenance ; while Mr. Darius ——— smiled likewise, but looked more bewildered than ever.

We will not pause upon the dinner ; suffice it to say, the two literary friends of Mr. Fitzurse severally fed and drank like men who knew how to estimate good things. The viscount himself watched their proceedings with a curious eye—not with a grudging one, let it be remarked—for there was a liberal spirit in the peer's bosom, which took a delight in seeing the acts of eating and drinking performed, and he was highly satisfied with the feats of his two guests,

" A pleasant thing, dinner, sir, after a long journey," said the peer, addressing the great Darius.

" A pleasant thing at any time," said Mr. Darius ; " when one can get it."

" That's true, by jingo," said his lordship ; " and I composed, this very day, a little poem in praise of the dinner-bell."

" Pray let us have it—pray let us have it," said Mr. Darius, who was evidently quite in the habit of submitting quietly to the infliction of an Amphitryon's verses ; " pray let us have it—pray let us have it, my

lord ;" and the peer, after three hems, and a blush which was lost amongst the other roses of his countenance, repeated the little piece of poetry with which we have already favoured the reader.

"Capital, capital!" cried Mr. Darius. But Mr. Winterton looked up from amidst the fragments of a *chateau russe*, and exclaimed—

"Do you call that poetry? 'Pon my life, in this age there must be some patent machine for making verses; for as children now perform, in the factories, the work that used formerly to require skilful men, so now every boarding-school chit, and every raw boy, throw off long pieces of versification, which are quite marketable commodities, and—"

"Which, to follow your metaphor, Winterton," cried Mr. Darius—"are measured by the yard, and not the foot."

"True, true," said Mr. Winterton, in a solemn tone; "but poetry is above their power."

"Well now, give us a specimen of your poetry, Winterton," said Mr. Darius—

"Pray do—pray do," cried Viscount Outrun; "by jingo, that's a good idea. Let's have a stave of poetry, by all means."

"Let heem have something to wet hees whistle," said the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus; "you kaen't expect a man to spout pottery, after eating all that preserved geenger, without a wet of claret."

"To be sure—to be sure," cried the peer. "Jerry—where's Jerry Tripe?"

"He's verifying his dream, I should think," said Tom Hamilton; "he's so long in the cellar;" but just at that moment, Jerry appeared; and after having swallowed a large glass of fragrant *Latour*, Mr. Winterton threw up his eyes to the ceiling, laid his right fist heavily upon the table, and began—

"Mark all ye men who eye these gloomy pages,
I sing of spell-bound corn and taxed sausages,
Pork most unduly held from British mouth,
And sugar duty-bound in the far south.
Oh ye, whose hearts do yearn to kindred woes,
Within whose breasts the fire of mercy glows;
Ye manufacturers who owe your fortune,
Your carriage and establishment for sporting——"

"That's a bad rhyme," said Darius.

"Let heem go on," said the Honourable Frederick.

"Bravo, bravo," said the peer; "I hate those d——d manufacturers, and the more ridiculous they are made the better."

Mr. Winterton shot a glance of indignation at him, and proceeded—

"Your carriage and establishment for sporting;
Your turtle-sonp, your plate, your haunch of venison,
The poems that you read of Alfred Tennyson;
Each snug delight that in your town house lies,
And secret cottage filled with soft black eyes;
You I appeal to, for those luckless elves,
For you, who hourly labour, not themselves."

"Rather obscure," said Tom Hamilton.

"All the more sublime," said Mr. Darius.

"True, true," said the peer; "the Castalian font is a little milky now and then, even at its highest source."

Mr. Winterton felt it to be a compliment, and went on—

"I ask you not to give one pleasure up,
To sweeten poverty's most bitter cup.
Resign no carriage! keep not one horse more!
Send not one pampered footman from your door!
Let cab and chariot wait at your abode,
And four swift horses roll you on the road!
Let turtle flow with champagne at the board,
And the whole Indies grace your plate-chest hoard;
Soft Turkey meet your feet where'er you tread,
And finest Irish deck your board and bed!
Of things permitted and forbidden swill,
Horse, hound, and pretty maiden if you will!
I ask for none of these, all, all I claim,
Is your loud voice man's misery to proclaim;
Rave in the senate, in the meeting shout,
Preach loud sedition to the rabble rout,
The angry passions of the hungry wield,
'Gainst landlord, farmer, labourer in the field;
Point envy's darts at them, and make of them your shield."

"Bravo, bravo, bravo," cried Mr. Darius; "that Alexandrine is beautiful, sublime, highly poetical! Go on, Winterton."

Mr. Winterton did so—

"Lo, mighty mill-owner, respected lord,
You wretch, in that dark cabin's walls abhorr'd,
Tableless, stoolless, bedless, there he lies,
Want in his heart and misery in his eyes;
His starving wife and babes around him press.
He gives them all he has to give—a kiss—
Poor food for wretchedness, but he's no more,
Except the tear that drops upon the floor,
To yield to those imploring eyes that seek
Bread from his hands, with his own hunger weak.
That man was once a joyous country youth—
That wife he wed in innocence and truth—
Those children sprung, he thought, to aid his toil,
When for thy mill he left his native soil.
Within that mill he laboured hour by hour,
To swell thy wealth, thy luxury and power;
Spent his best years, and with his sweat of brow
Made both what thou art, and what he is now.
But trade gets bad—thou canst not sell thy wares—
Thy fortune's made, however, and who cares?
Shut up the fabric—fast close the mill door,
Discharge the workmen—they are but the poor!
Cry down the corn-laws—give a hundred pound
To the poor fund; and high your name shall sound

For charity and goodness, although he
 Who made thee rich, still rots in penury.
 Turn indignation from thyself away
 To other men—let farmers, landlords pay.
 How horrible to tax the people's food,
 That they themselves may live! These men of blood
 Deserve no mercy at your hands, though they
 Plod on in toilful mediocrity,
 Make no such mighty wealth as you have made—
 Wring no such luxuries from the limbs of trade;
 And only claim, in favour of their cause,
 Promised protection from their country's laws.
 What's that to you? Your manufacturing vein
 Must at their cost cut out new roads to gain;
 'Tis a wise course, the source of power and pelf,
 To sacrifice all others to yourself;
 The way is open—specious words are rife,
 And a bad crop may give your cause new life.
 Outcry the means, tumult behind your hand,
 And starving crowds to second your demand.
 On you they all depend—your hand doles out
 The weekly pence that just keep death without;
 Raise loud the cry then, on all sorts of stages—
 Write fiery tracts, and treasonable pages—
 Bring down the price of corn—and lower your men's wages!"

"Whawe ahwe—whawe ahwe—whawe ahwe!" went somebody or something, and turning round towards the top of the table, they saw the viscount with his head resting upon his left hand, his face turned up towards the ceiling, his mouth open, and his nose emitting the dulcet sounds which we have attempted to convey to the reader's apprehension, by the above-written syllables.

"It must have been strong," said Mr. Fitzurse, "to make him forget his claret. Hallo, my lord, hallo—you've forgotten your wine, and he's done hees poetry, so you may wake up now in safety."

"Very good, capital, excellent!" cried the viscount, starting up; "by jingo, that last line was sublime—Pass the claret, Tom Hamilton."

Tom Hamilton was now seated by the side of Mr. Darius, talking with him very busily in an under tone. He did as he was bid, however, not without filling his own glass and that of his neighbour, and then resumed the conversation which had been interrupted. They both seemed deeply interested, and besides the words which passed between them, there was a multitude of gesticulations which showed how completely they were occupied. Mr. Winterton, for his part, looked round the table with eyes full of fiery indignation.

"Base and degenerate souls," he said, in a low but solemn voice, like the tapping of a hammer upon an empty barrel; "not one spark of poetic fire or genius amongst them—not a soul alive to the high art—not a heart that beats for the sorrows of their fellow-creatures."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried the viscount, laughing heartily as he caught these words; "very shocking, very horrible indeed. Terrible fellows

those two, see how they are talking; no spirit, no feeling, no ear, no mind, no understanding; by jingo, we'll punish them. Tom Hamilton, I fine you a bumper of claret, to be drunk standing, with your fingers on your nose as if you were taking physic, for chattering in such a manner while Mr. Winterton was spouting."

"And your lordship snoring," said Tom Hamilton; "but I bow to the court;" and without any very great signs of unwillingness, Tom Hamilton underwent the penalty of his treason against the muse.

Mr. Darius was fined the same manner; and the viscount continued to make up for Jerry Tripe's delay in bringing the claret, by its rapid circulation, till the Honourable Frederick's eyes began to assume that peculiar fish-like expression which indicated generally that his brain was becoming well sopped. Tom Hamilton seized the moment as if he had been looking out for that stage in his friend's nightly proceedings, and rose from the table saying—

"Come, my lord, had we not better go while we can. I think coffee and curaçoa would be expedient."

"With all my heart," replied the peer, rising and balancing himself upon one leg, with a certain degree of vacillation.

All moved but Mr. Winterton, who was taking sweet revenge, and snoring as loud as the viscount.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA—A FIRE-EATING ACQUAINTANCE—MR. FITZURSE
CHOICES BETWEEN THE DEATHS AND MARRIAGES—THE CRUELTY OF THOMAS
HAMILTON, ESQ.

"No! Nonsense! It kaent be!" cried Mr. Fitzurse, standing in the library, into which he had been seduced out of the drawing-room, and holding by the back of a chair to keep himself from oscillating. "Tom, you're hoaxing me; it's all stuff."

"Indeed it isn't, Fitzurse," replied Tom Hamilton, in a grave tone: "you've got yourself into a confounded scrape, and I don't see how you are to get out of it. Can you deny any of the facts, eh, Fitzurse?"

"Oh, demm it, I'll deny them all if that will do any good," said Mr. Fitzurse, whose ideas of morality were rather lax, as the reader knows.

"But it won't do any good," said Tom Hamilton: "I think it will do harm instead of good, as the facts can be proved against you. In the first place, did you, or did you not, promise the girl to marry her?"

"Why yees, I did; but you know, Tom, that means nothing. Why, my dear fellow, I've promised a dozen and more, and breaking any promise to one is but honesty to all the rest, ye see, Tom. Come, come, Tom Hamilton, thees is a good joke—you talking about promises of marriage, as if there was any thing in that. One would never get hold of a dairy maid, if one didn't promise all manner of things. I dare say you've promised them marriage fifty times."

"Never!" said Tom Hamilton, in a decided tone. "But that's nothing to do with the present question. In this instance, at least, you have put your promise down in writing."

"Why, yees," drawled Mr. Fitzurse, "I couldn't help that, you know, Tom. She would have it in writing, and as I was very much in love with her, I did put it down. But I'll wheedle her out of it some day: a little coaxing will soon do that."

"There you are quite mistaken," replied Mr. Hamilton in a decided tone; "for now she knows all about it, and of what value it is, she would never give it up: and besides——"

"But I say, Tom," rejoined Mr. Fitzurse, with a pleasant leer, "how come you to know so much of her concerns? I suppose you want to take her off my hands, eh? But that won't do, Tom; I can't spare her just yet. She's a devilish nice girl, Tom Hamilton, I can tell you that."

"I think so too," replied Tom Hamilton, "and therefore I think that after your promises, and all the devoted love she showed to you at the time of the duel, you ought to marry her. That's my opinion."

"Pooh! nonsense!" said Mr. Fitzurse, "we shall do very well without matrimony. But what I want to know, Tom, is, how you came to know so much about all her concerns? Demme, I don't like it, Tom."

"That's very easily explained," replied Tom Hamilton. "When you went away up to town she fancied that you had abandoned her and were going to marry Miss Longmore; so in despair she threw herself into the water, and I picked her out, and of course asked her what made her do such a thing; on which she told me the whole story. But you seem to me to be drunk, Fitzurse, so I had better talk to you about it to-morrow; only I wanted to prevent any row between you and her cousin, whom you have been fool enough to bring down with you."

"Pooh! that's all nonsense, Tom," said the honourable gentleman, looking a little dismayed, notwithstanding his affectation of incredulity; "that's a fudge, Tom, that's a fudge. You want to frighten me; but I won't be frightened. I've fought one duel, so why shouldn't I fight another?"

"Oh, if that's all," replied Tom Hamilton, "the matter will soon be arranged; only most likely he will horsewhip you first, and shoot you afterwards, for he is a devil of a hand, I know: you may see that by his coolness. And besides, you know, she'll have her action at law against you, and make you pay swinging damages into the bargain."

"It's demmed awkward," said Mr. Fitzurse, falling into a vein of thoughtfulness; but then recovering himself the moment after, he added, "but I won't believe a word of it. Why I know she had no relations; she told me so herself: she had no relations, I say."

"None but this cousin, who went to India," said Tom Hamilton; "and whom she and every body else thought was dead. But if you doubt my word, ask him yourself. He'll soon tell you, and in a very different manner, I can assure you, from what I have done, as soon as ever he finds out that you are Lord Outrun's son, and not his nephew. He was just now saying to me what an unfortunate thing it was that you were dead, for he wanted to see you, to thank you for all the kindness you had shown his cousin. But you see that's not the worst of the affair," continued Tom Hamilton; "the worst part of the whole is this business about Laura Longmore. You will certainly be tried for that; and unless you can prove that you had no intention of forcing her to marry you, it will be as awkward a job as ever I heard of. So you had better think over your position, Fitzurse, and let me know your intentions. Here I am, always ready to help you if I can. If you've a mind to fight this fellow, the sooner it's done the better: I should say to-morrow morning if I were you, and bully the thing out at once. At all events, you get credit by it then."

"Demm the credit!" replied Mr. Fitzurse; "the only thing I got by the last was, to get kicked out of the lord mayor's ball as a dead man. But perhaps this fellow might take fright, if one were to talk high."

"I think you made a bad game of that the last time," said Tom Hamilton. No, no; that's not upon the cards, my good friend. When this fellow, Darius Markem, shot young Grey, of the 16th——"

"No! Did he shoot him?" cried Mr. Fitzurse.

"Through the liver," continued Tom Hamilton, "it was simply because he mentioned the very word fear in his presence. He said no gentleman ought to mention such a thing before another: it was like talking an unknown language, and therefore must intend an insult, for no gentleman ought to be supposed to know what the word *fear* means. He is very good-natured, however, and easily satisfied, though somewhat hot and peppery at first. When he called out Grantham for striking his dog, he offered to look over the affair, even upon the ground, if Grantham would go down upon his knees, pull off his hat, and ask the dog's pardon."

"And did he?" said Mr. Fitzurse.

"Oh no," replied Tom Hamilton; "he said he would never ask pardon of any son-of-a-bitch in Europe."

"Well?" cried Mr. Fitzurse, with his mouth wide open.

"Oh, Markem shot him through the head, that's all: but the jury found him not guilty, because he had made overtures for a reconciliation. But to talk on more serious matters, Fitzurse, what do you intend to do? Do act decidedly, one way or another."

"Why what would you do, Tom, if you were I?" drawled Mr. Fitzurse.

"Why," cried Tom Hamilton, with a thoughtful and considerate air, "I think I should be inclined to fight him: he *might* miss one, you know. But then, of course, if I really did like the girl, and had promised to marry her, that would make a great difference. Come, Fitzurse, I'll tell you what will be the best plan. No man likes to do any thing upon compulsion, you know: so suppose you fight him first, and then, if you happen to escape, or are only wounded, you can marry her afterwards; then you will avoid being prosecuted for breach of promise; and, in regard to this business of Miss Longmore, instead of being tried for carrying off forcibly an heiress with the intent to marry her against her will, you can answer at once that you had no such intention, as you were just about to marry another person. But by all means fight him first—fight him first; take my advice."

"No, no; demm it," cried the honourable gentleman, "if I am to do all that, I shall have work enough for one morning; so I'll have no fighting, Tom. It's very unpleasant stuff, fighting; and one has such a headache after."

"That's the brandy," said Tom Hamilton, significantly.

"But I say, Tom," continued Mr. Fitzurse, with a blank look, "how are we to manage this devil of a marriage? The peer will never consent, and he'll make me fight at all events."

The words "that would be difficult" sprang to Tom Hamilton's lips, but he thought of the fishing and shooting, and merely replied, "Oh, very easy; a private marriage, you know, pleasant and romantic. You can conceal it then as long as you like. You are both of age."

We can ride over and get a licence to-morrow ; and old Hookham, the parson, whom your father put in because he outdrank him by a bottle, will make you one flesh in no time."

"Vairy well," said Mr. Fitzurse, thoughtfully ; but just at that moment the door of the library opened, a step was heard, and in walked Mr. Darius at full length.

Mr. Fitzurse gave a great start, and his under jaw rattled as if there were a screw loose.

"Ah, my dear sir," said Mr. Darius, advancing with a sweet and pleasant air, "your uncle's sound asleep, Winterton is snoring, and so I took the opportunity just to pop out in order to inquire for a young lady who resides in this house, I am informed—a Miss Jane Markem."

"Yes, sir ; yes, my dear sir ; yes," replied Mr. Fitzurse, with evident marks of trepidation, "yes, she does live here. Don't go, Tom ; pray stay ; why where are you running to ?"

"I'll be back again, my dear fellow," said Tom Hamilton. "I've a little business to settle out here for a moment ; I'll be back again presently. You and this gentleman can entertain yourselves very well, I dare say, till I come back."

"Why what's the matter, my dear sir ?" said Mr. Darius ; "you seem alarmed. I hope nothing unpleasant has occurred—nothing to occasion you apprehension."

"Oh no ; oh dear, no," replied Mr. Fitzurse, doing his best to look easy. "Pray be seated—pray be seated. Charming person Miss Markem—delightful person ; don't know any body for whom I've a greater respect and esteem, and all that ; very charming person indeed."

"Very happy to hear you think so, sir," replied Mr. Darius, in a tone which the honourable gentleman thought somewhat dry. "I myself cannot judge of her charms, not having seen her since her childhood. However, she ought to be a charming person, and that's enough for any one, sir. Her family was most respectable, and that's quite enough for any body, I say. Don't you think so, sir ?"

"Oh quite, quite, quite," replied Mr. Fitzurse ; who would not at that moment have contradicted any of the dogmas of his revered companion for a dukedom at the very least. "Quite sufficient for anybody."

"I am glad you think so," said the tall man, in as dry a tone as ever.

"Oh decidedly," replied Mr. Fitzurse ; "I agree with you perfectly ; and indeed intend very shortly to show how completely I agree with you, by deeds as well as words."

"I am happy to hear it," replied six foot and an inch. "But pray may I have the honour of seeing this young lady ?"

"Oh certainly, certainly," replied Mr. Fitzurse, "indubitably. Just wait till Tom Hamilton comes back, and—and——"

"Will Mr. Hamilton's presence be necessary ?" said Mr. Fitzurse's tall friend.

"Why I think so," replied Mr. Fitzurse, growing every moment

more nervous. "Tom! why where the deuce is the fellow got to? Why, Tom," he said, going to the door, "Tom!"

For a moment, as there was no answer, Mr. Fitzurse considered the propriety of running; and it is probable that such would have been the consummation of his interview with the tall gentleman with the Persian-Christian name, had not the latter at that moment advanced to the door, saying, "Can I fetch him, Mr. Fitzurse? though I really do not see what is the need for his presence. I am delighted with the pleasure of your company, and can enjoy your society *tête-a-tête* for half an hour very comfortably."

"D—n your supercilious politeness," said Mr. Fitzurse to himself. "It's just the way with all these cut-throats: they are as civil while they are butchering you as a slaughterhouse-man sticking a lamb. I wish Tom Hamilton would come. Oh, I must marry her, that's clear enough; there's no getting off. Tom was quite right; it must be done, and one may as well do it with a good grace; so here goes—I am very happy indeed, sir," he continued aloud, "you speak in such high terms of this young lady's family; for to let you into a secret, I intend to marry her."

"My dear sir," cried Mr. Darius, grasping his hand, "I am delighted to hear it. I can assure you I am overjoyed, and trust it will be for your mutual happiness."

"Oh I don't doubt it in the least," replied Mr. Fitzurse; "I'm sure she's a very good girl, and a very pretty girl too."

"Well, that's all lucky," said Mr. Darius, in a sort of indifferent tone, which made the honourable scion of the house of Outrun fancy that he suspected no such marriage would have taken place but for his presence."

"I can't help that," he said to himself; "demme, the fellow can't call me out for not intending to do a thing. Ah, here comes Tom! Why, my dear Tom Hamilton, where have you been to?"

"Our friend here," said Mr. Darius, in an elevated and patronizing manner, "has done me the honour of communicating to me his intention of espousing Miss Jane Markem."

"The devil he has!" said Tom Hamilton.

"I can't tell what the deuce he means," said Mr. Darius, in a whisper; "but I never saw any body so civil in all my life."

Tom Hamilton gave a significant glance, to indicate the necessity of caution; and Mr. Fitzurse, grasping him by the arm, drew him a little on one side, saying, "I say, Tom, he wants to see her! Demme, what's to be done? He wants to see her! Why, if one doesn't prime her, she may tell all about it, and then there will be the devil to pay."

"Leave it to me—leave it to me," said Tom. "He mustn't see her yet on any account. Let me prepare her mind, and reason with her. You know, if you marry her, she has no business to say any thing. If she gets married, that's all she has to do with it. She may make a great deal of mischief else."

"Tell her so—tell her so, Tom, there's a good fellow," whispered Mr. Fitzurse.

"Certainly," replied Tom Hamilton. "I will tell her she may get you shot, if she doesn't mind; and she won't like that, I suspect. It's a terrible thing to see him one loves killed, lying with a large hole in their head or their heart; yet such might be the consequence of any indiscretion on her part."

Cruel Tom Hamilton! Thou wert now sporting unnecessarily with the feelings of the gentle and amiable being who reposed such implicit confidence in thee. One whose virtuous abhorrence of bloodshed, whose fondness for all pacific arts, whose Christian forbearance from all acts which might endanger the lives of others and himself ought to have commanded more consideration and respect. Why didst thou laugh in thy sleeve, Tom Hamilton, and chuckle in secret cachinnation over all the thrilling emotions which, with the microscope of much experience, you saw going on in the Fitzursine heart? So it was, however; but at length he condescended to relieve his friend by addressing Mr. Darius in a solemn and considerate tone, and saying—"My friend Fitzurse here informs me that you are desirous, my dear sir, of seeing Miss Markem to-night; but, under the circumstances, unless her mind were properly prepared, I think it might agitate her too much. The viscount, too, might wake and come out; and as this affair of the marriage is to be kept profoundly secret, that would never do. Wait till to-morrow morning, then: in the meantime, let me speak to you for a moment. Fitzurse, you go into the drawing-room again, and I will settle every thing with my worthy friend here."

"Very well, very well," replied Mr. Fitzurse, moving towards the door. But ere he reached it, he stopped, beckoned to Tom Hamilton, and whispered in his ear when he came, "I say, Tom, mind you don't make him angry. I agree to every thing—every thing, you know—settlements—any thing you like; only I won't fight. Can't fight Jane's cousin, you know; that's quite out of the question."

"Certainly, certainly," replied Tom Hamilton; "if you are going to marry her, you can't, of course, shoot her nearest relation; but as to marrying her, that's another affair; there's no compulsion, you know. I'll tell him you won't marry her in a minute, if you like it."

"No, no, no," cried Mr. Fitzurse with great rapidity. "Demme, I'll marry her; nothing shall stop me from marrying her!" and with a mind greatly relieved by his own vigour of determination, Mr. Fitzurse left the room.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE CHEVALIER TURNS MISSIONARY—HIS PRINCIPLES OF ACTION TOWARDS A HORSE
—HE HOLDS A CONVERSATION WITH MR. LONGSHANKS UPON A GRAVE SUBJECT—A
MEDICO-PHYSIOLOGICAL DISCUSSION—A HINT UPON TRIPE.

“LET us request the Chevalier de Lunatico to go,” said Mr. Alderman Rotundity, addressing a party of six other gentlemen assembled at the Half Moon, at Outrun, a little after nine o’clock on the morning of the following day. “He is perfectly unprejudiced and disinterested; no one is so well fitted as himself to bear our ultimatum. If we go as magistrates we must act as magistrates, and deal with the matter, not according to feeling but according to law. Mr. Longmore and Harry Worrel are, as they well may be, too much excited and indignant. No one but the chevalier, in short, is, by coolness, calmness, deliberate wisdom, and freedom from all prejudice, calculated to bear our flag of truce.”

“Hear, hear, hear!” cried every body present.

The chevalier thrust his hand into the bosom of his waistcoat, thought for a moment, and then replied—

“Cool I certainly am, deliberate I undoubtedly will be, unprejudiced I am officially, but I cannot say I am disinterested where my fair friend, Laura, is concerned. However, gentlemen, I will undertake the task, and execute it to the best of my abilities, if you think fit. But let me know precisely the terms of my mission.”

“It is simply this,” replied Mr. Rotundity—“I speak under the correction of these gentlemen, to demand, in our united names, that Miss Laura Longmore be immediately restored to her father.”

“Or rather to the whole body of magistrates here sitting, that they may deliver her to her father,” said Mr. Puddenstream.

“Nay, nay, nay,” said Mr. Rotundity, “it comes to the same thing. *‘Alter rixatur de lana sæpe caprina et propugnat nugis armatus.’* Say her father, chevalier; but at the same time give notice, that if before the hour of noon, the young lady is not in this parlour, a search warrant will be immediately issued, as well as warrants for the apprehension of all persons who, we have reason to believe, were concerned in this gross act of abduction.”

“Well, gentlemen,” replied the chevalier, with a low bow, and a look which, if it had been exhibited by one of the ordinary beings of our terrestrial sphere, we should have called conceited, but which, considering his high station, his qualities, and mission, could only be looked upon as an expression of well-justified self-confidence and trust in his own powers—“well, gentlemen, I will undertake the charge you give me; but excuse me for reiterating my opinion, that you will be disappointed.”

“ Thus saying, he quitted the room, mounted a horse which had been lent him by the worthy alderman, and once more took his way along that memorable road by which he had proceeded once before upon a mission of a belligerent character. The horse, as the reader knows, had come some miles that morning, and the chevalier was a man tender to the brute creation. God gave us power over them, he always thought, to use them, but not to ill use them. There is a sort of compact he would say, between man and his beast: the beast promises his services, and the man his protection; and whoever breaks the engagement is a swindler. If reason gives me power over a beast, the chevalier would go on, it ought to give me power over myself, otherwise I am the greater beast of the two. In consequence of such reasoning, the chevalier went slow; and before he had gone a hundred yards along the lane, he heard the trotting of another horse behind him. The chevalier was a wise man; and though he looked about him in the world, he never looked behind him, but calmly and imperturbably went upon his way, leaving every thing that was past to take care of itself, and any thing that was following to come up if it could.

In the space of one minute and six-and-forty seconds, however, there rode up to the chevalier, upon a stout, brown horse, a tall, thin, bony man, dressed in a long cut coat of black, a waistcoat with large flaps, and black silk stockings. On the top of his head was a small three-cornered cocked hat, and over his stockings were drawn, very nearly till they met the breeches, a pair of boots which might well have formed part of Miss Rotundity's museum, being portions of an extinct animal, namely, the beau of the eighteenth century. They were of the kind called pendragons, which was, indeed, a near approach to the hessian, and on the front of each hung down a large tassel of black silk, which gave to both legs a finish very similar to that which the person of the rider altogether received from a thick queue which dangled down the collar of his coat.

“ Ha, chevalier!” cried Mr. Longshanks, for Mr. Longshanks it was—“ ha, chevalier! is that you? Why where are you riding too. Some fool's errand, I dare say.”

“ Something like it, I am afraid,” replied the chevalier, and he explained to the worthy surgeon the object of his journey; on which the latter immediately burst forth into one of his vehement tirades.

“ I thought so—I thought so,” he cried. “ It is the most extraordinary thing in the world, that if you see a man riding along the road between nine o'clock in the morning and eight o'clock at night, you may safely venture to swear that he is a fool, going upon some fool's errand. Not once in a thousand times will you be wrong.”

“ And if you find a man going after eight,” said the chevalier, “ what may your deductions be then, my good friend?”

“ That he's a rascal,” replied Mr. Longshanks; “ the one is very nearly as sure as the other. Did you look into the churchyard, chevalier, as you came along?”

“ No,” replied the chevalier, “ I did not.

“ I did,” replied Mr. Longshanks; “ I always do. I like to look into a churchyard.”

"I should suppose," said the chevalier, slyly, "that it was not altogether an object of agreeable contemplation to gentlemen of your profession."

"Ha, ha!" cried Mr. Longshanks, "you have us there, my friend. But if all men were to see the churchyard with the same feelings that I do, most of our great surgeons might glory in their deeds. One never can convince men not to be idiots on such subjects, however; and instead of looking upon the cemetery as the place of calm repose after this world's toil—the field in which the mortal body is sown in corruption to rise incorruptible—they regard it with horror, and fill it with the phantoms of fancy. The peaceful waving of the churchyard trees above my head wakens in me no dark and gloomy images, but, on the contrary, calls up faith and hope, with the blessed foretaste of that sort of reposeful feeling which we may anticipate in another state."

"But I thought you surgeons," said the chevalier, "set your faces strongly against the idea of a resurrection of the body."

"Fools, fools, fools! my dear sir," said Mr. Longshanks—"I did not say surgeons were any thing but fools either. The only difference is, that they are fools with a knowledge of cutting, and sometimes a little anatomy. Not often that, however. But why do they say there is no resurrection? Because the parts of the frame corrupt? Because its particles separate? Because they are dispersed here and there? And is this the reason why the God who united them all at first, should not at his will recall into one frame all such atoms as may be fitted to form that incorruptible body with which we are to rise again? Let no one tell me either that the vivifying principle may not remain full, perfect, ready for re-developement in each or any of those atoms for thousands, ay, and for millions of years. Do we not see the animalcules which have lain dead in the very heart of the rock, burst forth into life again after unknown ages of apparent extinction? Do we not see the grain of wheat which has been buried for thousands of years with the mummy in the catacomb, still retain within itself the principle of life, and grow green and flourish when taken from the tomb? Where shall this stop? Why should it ever stop? and still more, why should we doubt it when the lips of embodied truth have told us that it shall be so?"

"Upon my word, I don't know," replied the chevalier; "but I have got a great number of little tickets in my pocket, much at the service of those good people who do doubt it. Scepticism seems to be one of the great lunacies of the age: people doubt every thing, even after it has been proved a thousand times, and go back to the same arguments that have been refuted over and over again, as if they were quite new and unanswerable."

"Very true, chevalier, very true," replied Mr. Longshanks. "Look at the question of infection and non-infection—you hear the drivellers arguing upon it from morning till night; and, not contented with impugning the character of the spasmodic cholera, they would take away the very reputation of the plague. There is no proposition in

Euclid more clearly demonstrable and demonstrated, than that the plague is infectious. Russel proved it beyond all possibility of doubt, half a century ago, and yet there are dolts found to deny the fact even now; stupidly arguing, because one man, subjected to the influence of the poison, does not take the disease, that it is not communicable by such means."

"I have always heard," replied the chevalier, "that in logic it required a great number of negatives to dispose of one affirmative; but probably, in such matters as you speak of, the affirmative cannot be distinctly proved."

"Just as distinctly, I say," cried the surgeon, "as any other proposition. When a man lifts up his hand and makes a straightforward blow, and his fist touches another man's head, and that other man tumbles down, you may say that there is no proof that the one was knocked by the other; for he may have fallen down on purpose, as men do upon the stage, just at the moment the other's fist touched his head; but if you see a great many people very unwilling to tumble down, who all fall the moment that the man strikes at them in the same way, there is sufficient proof for any reasonable man, that he is the *knocker down* and the others are the *knockees*. Thus, if one man catches a particular disease, when he visits another who has got it, that is no absolute proof that the disease is contagious or infectious either; but if every body but one or two catch it, who do visit the sick person, you may naturally conclude that it is infectious or contagious. I'll tell you, chevalier, how these people contrive to befool themselves and all the world: they don't lay down their premises properly, and consequently argue from a false foundation. Their first mistake is, thinking that you can hold water in a sieve. Before a man can take or receive a disease, his constitution must be susceptible of it—no man can have the gout in his toe, who has two wooden legs. Many men who have had the small-pox are insusceptible of receiving it again, and nothing you will do will give it them. The same is the case with all other diseases. The first condition is, that a man's body should be in such a condition that the disease can take hold upon him. There are three grand species of disease, sir, in this world: diseases that are neither infectious nor contagious; diseases that are contagious but not infectious; and diseases which are infectious—which last I believe to be universally contagious also. The first class proceeds from some disorganization of the man's own body, or from some poison imbibed, which has its specific effect, but is not reproduced by the body on which it acts. The second proceeds from some poison imbibed, which reproduces itself, but which is not diffusible in the fluid which we call air. It can be communicated to another person alone by the touch; is taken in by one or other of those little mouths that are open all over the human body; and is just as much a poison as if it acted through the stomach. The third is a similar poison, but is diffusible or soluble in the air. It may be through the lungs it acts, it may be through the stomach, it may be through the skin; but the only difference between it and the other poison I have mentioned, is the diffusibility of the one and not of the

other ; and this makes the difference between contagion and infection. Both of these latter diseases require, as I have before said, a certain condition in the body of man for their reception ; but the latter, from the very quality of diffusibility which it possesses, requires another condition, that is—a certain state of the air in which it is dissolved. This air is a fluid, like water, or any thing else ; but some things won't dissolve in cold water at all, but will in hot. If I dissolve oxalic acid in pure water, it is rank poison ; but if that water contains a certain portion of alkali, the acid is neutralized, and the drink becomes harmless. This theory is enough to explain all the phenomena of disease, and there is no other theory that can ; so that those who pretend there is no such thing as contagion and infection, are no better than fools."

"I heard it asserted the other day," said the chevalier, "that when you had lately a severe epidemic in the country, both physicians and politicians endeavoured to cry down the idea of infection, in order to diminish the alarm."

"I do not know whether they did or not," replied his companion ; "but if they did, the only difference that makes, chevalier, is to show them liars as well as fools, but not a bit the less fools for that, for every liar is a fool in the very first instance. Truth, my dear sir, truth, is to morals, what gold is to metals—the only thing perfectly pure, and therefore a species of riches which every one should covet, as possessing intrinsic value that never can be lost. No chemistry can decompose it ; the worst air cannot tarnish it ; its value is recognised by all nations ; and the moral gold has this advantage over the mineral, that no one can rob us of it, and if we lose it, it is by our own fault."

"I agree with you entirely," replied the chevalier, "but I wish we could get a little more of it, both in this world and the world from which I come. My belief is, that every body lies more or less, from the clergyman in the pulpit, to the politician in parliament ; from the glover who sells sheepskin for kid, to the orator who puts off his private interest for patriotism. All the world's a rascal, sir, and a very great rascal, too ; but I do particularly wish, at the present moment, that I could get at the truth of a story concerning a mutual friend of ours."

"Ah !" cried the surgeon, "who do you mean, who do you mean—Harry Worrel ?"

"No," replied the chevalier, "I mean Joey Pike ;" and thereupon he set to work, and related to Mr. Longshanks the whole of the statements made by the renowned Joey on the preceding evening.

Mr. Longshanks listened with profound attention, and remained silent for at least two minutes after the chevalier had done. From the gravity of his look during those two minutes, nobody could have the slightest idea of what was to follow ; but in the end, he burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"Well, chevalier," he said at length, "go on, go on. I could set you upon the right track, but I won't. You are fond of a wild goose

chase I see, otherwise you would not be riding now to Outrun Castle, to ask for a girl who, you know, is not there."

"If you can set me upon the right track, I beg you will do it," said the chevalier; "and as to my own conduct, let me explain, first, that you ought to recollect, any private information I may possess regarding Miss Longmore, was given under an injunction to secrecy."

"True, true," cried Mr. Longshanks, "you are a man of honour, and keep your word."

"We lunatics always do," replied the chevalier, looking upon a promise, even when made to a woman, as a bond which we have no right to break. "But moreover, if I am fond of a wild goose chase, as you say, it is but a part of my mission; for what other definition would you give of this expedition of mine, to look for stray spirits from the moon. It is a wild goose chase, indeed; nevertheless, I have already bagged a good many birds, and shall bag a great many more before I have done with them. Take care, my dear Mr. Longshanks, that you are not amongst the number."

Mr. Longshanks laughed again heartily, and replied—

"Well, well, go on, go on! Catch me if you can; but as for this business of Joey Pike, all I have to tell you is, the boy's a fool. Nevertheless, in the hunt, you may come upon things that you little expect; but I fear you will make nothing of it. Unless you can get some hold on that consummate blackguard, Jeremiah Tripe, there is no chance for you."

"I *have* got a hold upon him," replied the chevalier emphatically; "a hold from which he cannot escape."

"Then grasp him tight," exclaimed Mr. Longshanks, "for I never knew such an old eel in my life. I once thought I had him at the point of death, and tried to make him confess, but he said if he was dying, he might as well have another bottle before he went. That first fuddled him, and then cured him; and so I lost both my patient and my penitent. But as you are going on to the castle, I'll ride with you, for I'm bound thither also. They are all ill together there, it seems, and very likely are all dead by this time."

"Why, what is the matter with them?" exclaimed the chevalier, in some surprise.

"Only the Asiatic cholera, I should think," replied Mr. Longshanks. "If the man told the symptoms rightly, you will find them all by this time as stiff as a stockfish, and as blue as a bilberry; there hasn't happened such good luck in the parish for the last forty years. But let us get on, let us get on, for if they're all dead, I shall lose my fee, and I have promised Widow Green to re-thatch her cottage."

CHAPTER L.

MR. DARIUS COMPOSES A HISTORY—HIS BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EDUCATION—JANE DIFFERS WITH HIM ON A POINT OF LONGITUDE—A NEW REASON FOR A CHRISTIAN NAME—TRAVELS THROUGH MANY LANDS—THE WAR-DANCE OF THE TONGA ISLANDS—MR. FITZURSE RESCUED FROM SCALPING.

“WHY, my dear sir, my dear sir,” cried Mr. Darius, whom we and Mr. Fitzurse, as the reader must potently recollect, left alone with Tom Hamilton in the library, “why did you place me in such an awkward position, without information, without knowledge, without the slightest indication of what I was to say, except a few words whispered after dinner? The slightest indiscretion on my part, might have spoiled the affair. You must have supposed me to have possessed a genius superior to the whole human race.”

“Could I doubt it?” said Tom Hamilton; “could I doubt that the man who, for a *consideration*, carried on two opposite daily journals at once—the high tory A——, and the radical B——,—and displayed equal ability in stating his arguments, and refuting them on each side; the man who has furnished to the public more interesting accidents and offences; more highway robberies, crimes, and misdemeanours; more extraordinary natural phenomena; more shameful cases of scandal, and more touching and pathetic incidents, than any man in Europe—at the rate of a penny a line—could I doubt that he would be ready at a moment’s notice, to deal with a subject of which he knew nothing, as glibly as Lord J—— R——.”

“Ah, my dear sir, you overwhelm me,” exclaimed Mr. Darius; “I really blush, but it was an awful situation to be placed in. He came very close to the subject, and I knew not a word about it. What could I do? Why I made up my mind at once that I would look profound, speak dry, and talk vague. Not Sir Robert himself—my friend Sir Robert, I mean, who is destined one day or another to leave Pitt as much in the shade as Pitt left Walpole—not Sir Robert, I say, could have looked more coldly impenetrable upon a poor Conservative putting in his claim for official appointment, than I did upon this Fitzurse: not Sir Robert could have acted with more cool caution.”

“I doubt it not in the least,” replied Tom Hamilton; “I knew I left the matter in good hands, and in the meantime I went and spoke with Miss Marken, so she is now prepared to have a cousin.”

“But is she up to her part?” exclaimed Mr. Darius; “you must tell her every thing she has to say, and prepare her for all contingencies.”

“Not at all, not at all,” replied Tom Hamilton; “you mistake the matter and the person altogether. If I were to let her know that it was all a hoax, a thousand to one she would not consent to it; and

even if she did, she would make some blunder in five minutes, which would let the cat out of the bag."

"Then what must we do?" cried Mr. Darius, in some surprise.

"Hoax her too," replied Tom Hamilton.

"Oh, I understand," said the tall man, "I understand; but if he finds out that you have done the whole business?"

"Why I will fight him, if he likes it," replied Tom Hamilton, with a grim smile. "But to return to the matter in hand. I told her simply that her cousin, Mr. Darius Marken, had suddenly come back from India, and was actually in the house, to which she replied, 'La, Mr. Hamilton, I never knew I had a cousin.' So now, my dear sir, you must as speedily as possible get up a story of your birth, parentage, and education; your travels in India; your return to England; your accidental meeting with Fitzurse; and your coming down here."

"That will soon be done, that will soon be done," replied Mr. Darius; "the India part of the business is plain sailing enough, for that's all true."

"I should suppose that there would lie the great difficulty," said Tom Hamilton; "fiction is your forte."

"You are too kind," said Mr. Darius; "but though men say truth lies in a well, yet, in this instance, the truth is at hand, and we shall have to bucket up the fiction: so, as we have little time, we had as well take the truth, for want of something better. Having been in India, then, where you first met me.—Ah! those were happy times, Mr. Hamilton. I was sub-editor of the 'Poonah Kuzzilbash' then; that was a slashing journal; how we did cut up the governor-general, and all the members of council. However, there's no fear; I'll make a story such as would defy the devil himself to separate the truth from the falsehood. We journalists can always do that; truth, like gold, is infinitely divisible, and a very few grains will serve to gild many hundred weight of the other thing. Give me ten minutes, and I can do it at any time. But where was the girl born? Where did her parents live?"

"Oh, at Market Greenford, Market Greenford," replied Tom Hamilton.

But Mr. Darius was called upon to exercise his inventive faculties more speedily than he expected, for scarcely were the words Market Greenford out of Tom Hamilton's mouth, when the door of the library opened, and in walked the Honourable Augustus Frederick, or Frederick Augustus, leading in, tucked under his arm, Jane, the housemaid, in her after-dinner dress, blushing up to the eyes, and looking as pretty as possible. There was something touching, as a sentimental novelist would say, in the way in which Mr. Fitzurse managed the matter. He held her close to him—it might be to steady his steps—but kept her a little in advance towards Mr. Darius, as if he said to himself, "If this bloody Hector slay me, he must strike me through her we both love!"

It was pathetic—it was tragic; and Darius, who had a taste for the drama, instantly caught the tone and starting slightly, gazed for a moment in Jane's face, as if a thousand bewildering, but charming

recollections rushed upon his mind. Then darting forward with extended arms, he folded her to his breast, exclaiming, "It is! It must be! It ought to be, even if it isn't! My sweet cousin! My dear Jane!" and here he held up his right hand and both his eyes to heaven, and would fain have wept—but he couldn't.

Poor Jane was very much affected; and Mr. Fitzurse had nearly fallen flat upon his back. But instantly Mr. Darius seized him by the wrist with one hand, took Jane's delicate fingers with the other, and dragged them both forward towards Tom Hamilton, like Norma, with her pretty little illegitimates. Then freeing the wrist of the Honourable Frederick, he waved his hand, and taking Tom Hamilton for the audience, spoke the following speech:—

"This is the most touching moment of my life. How sweet, how trebly sweet, when, after wandering far in distant lands, friendless and lonely, with my heart sighing for the sweet relationships of life, I return to my native land, and find so fair a flower as this, grown up from the parent stock from which I sprung, and ready to entwine in matrimonial union with this sturdy scion of a high and honourable tree.—Do you recollect me, cousin?"

"No, indeed, sir," replied Jane, in the simplest possible tone, "I never saw you before, that I remember."

"Ah, your young eyes were innocent of mischief when I left these shores," said Mr. Darius.

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Mr. Fitzurse, who was beginning to recover from his apprehension, and willing to become a little familiar with his tall cousin, "mischievous enough now."

"Sir!" said Mr. Darius, in a tone that made Mr. Fitzurse dwindle into nothing in a moment, "may I ask you to repeat what you said?"

"Oh, nothing at all, nothing at all," said Mr. Fitzurse in a great hurry, while Jane could almost have cried, at finding herself, for the first time, with one so ready to take her part. "I only said they were very pretty little wicked eyes as ever I saw."

"Wicked?" said Mr. Darius, turning with a doubtful look towards Tom Hamilton—"Wicked? That's complimentary, I think?"

"Decidedly!" said Tom Hamilton; "but come, come, my good friend, you are always too quick and peppery; sit down and tell us all about yourself. I recollect you in India, filling a very comfortable situation, but of your previous history I know nothing."

"My story shall be told in a minute," replied the tall man, unbending from his tragic airs, and the party being seated around, he proceeded, with vast powers of composition, and a somewhat jocular air, as follows:—

"I was born in the little town of Market Greenford, but as I have not seen it for many years, (he never saw it in his life,) I will not attempt to give a particular account of it."

"You need not," said Mr. Fitzurse, "for we all know it quite well."

"Well," continued Mr. Darius, "my father, the uncle of this fair lady, who was a tall man like myself —"

"My father was very short and fat," said Jane.

"That's what I was going to observe," said Mr. Darius; "my father, who was a very tall man, like myself, carried off all the length of the family; and at an early period he entered an honourable profession, the apprentices of which receive, instead of paying, a fee. With that fee, which amounted to about one pound ten, he commenced his career; and in the ranks of his brethren he soon got up—I mustn't say he rose, for he couldn't be well higher than he was, being six feet four without his shoes. In the course of time he became a sergeant, but whether in the court, or the camp, I must leave you to divine. Finding himself then in a state to maintain a family, he married my mother, who was the widow of a general merchant, and had seen a great deal of life, and not a little of death too, having been, with her husband, entangled in some transactions with the army, to which they became commissioners of supply. On the decease of her first husband, who died in a more elevated situation than he had ever hoped to obtain, through some unfortunate accident, which produced nearly the same effects as a quinsy, she did not long remain a widow, for her charms and her spirit soon won the affections of my father, and I was the first and only fruit of their union."

"La," said Jane.

"Of all the heroes of antiquity," continued the tall gentleman, "whom my father had ever heard of, the great Persian, whose name I bear, was the one he admired most, because he was chosen king by the neighing of a horse."

"Pray why did that render him so peculiarly estimable?" demanded Tom Hamilton.

"Because most kings, when they are chosen at all, are chosen by the braying of asses," replied Mr. Darius. "However, Darius was I called, and after a certain lapse of time, my father retired from the profession he had embraced, and took to the cure of soles."

"What! turned parson I suppose?" said Mr. Fitzurse.

"Excuse me, sir," said the tall man, "but the soles he dealt with were of a different kind. Though he exercised several of the offices of a parson upon them; occasionally bored them, sometimes joined them together, hammered away at them a great deal, and did the last offices for them, yet he wasn't a parson, properly so called. Well, I went on growing, as you may imagine, and my worthy parent, who was himself a man of education, determined that I should have the same advantages as himself, so he sent me to school, through which I passed with some *éclat*. My father made the schoolmaster a present annually, of a leathern strap, with which our lessons used to be impressed upon our memories and the palms of our hands with great vigour and discretion. Twice every day, morning and evening, my hand used to receive the friendly and beneficial print of this tough piece of hide; but at length the master took to flogging as well as strapping, and thought fit to whip me twice in one day. By this time, I was sixteen, taller than himself and well nigh as stout. Now, my father having been a *sergeant*, as I said, I had a natural dislike to *corporal* punishment, so I lay in bed all night, thinking how I could

revenge myself. At length a bright idea crossed my mind: he has flogged me, I thought, so hang me if I don't flog him; and the next morning, having laid my plan with two fellow-sufferers, we caught the master in the school-room, tied his hands, seized upon the birch, and applied four-and-twenty good sounding lashes upon the most fleshy part of his person. He did not like it at all; and as may be conceived, after such a performance, it was high time for me to quit school, which I did *instantier*, without asking if the holydays had begun. Home I dared not go, and so I went away to my aunt's—your poor dear mother's, Jane. She was a pretty little woman, as ever I set eyes on."

"La, she was very tall," said Jane.

"Ay, that was what I was going to observe," said Mr. Darius, who was a grand master of humbug. "She was tall, compared with her husband, but nevertheless, she was small for her size, especially about the waist, and you can't deny that she had a very pretty little foot and ankle like yourself."

"Ay, that she had, I do believe," said Jane, with a sweet smile, and Mr. Darius proceeded—

"I then enlisted in a corps that was going to India."

"Pray was it not the horse-marines?" said Tom Hamilton, who had enjoyed himself greatly.

"No," answered Mr. Darius; "it was a regiment of heavy infantry, where every man was obliged to be six feet and an inch; and as I measured that height, I was readily admitted. Having arrived in India, I distinguished myself greatly, as you know, Mr. Hamilton, in the attack upon the caves of Elephanta, and the storming of the heights of Persepolis. I rose gradually, and had I been able to purchase, might soon have been colonel of the regiment; but first came that unfortunate affair, when I shot young Smith, you know; and then you recollect, Hamilton, my duel with the general, poor fellow."

"Oh, perfectly, perfectly," said Tom Hamilton, while Mr. Fitzurse got to the other side of his chair, and turned very cold about the feet and hands.

"I didn't intend to kill him," continued Mr. Darius, "but he would have it; and after that it was quite vain to think of promotion in the army, so I laid down the sword, and took up the pen, in following which I was nearly as successful; so that having at last made a comfortable little independence, I visited the great wall of China, made a pleasure tour to Kamtchatka, spent a very delightful day with the Sultan of Borneo, when I helped him to cut off the heads of fifty of his great nobles who had rebelled against him, and then turning my steps homeward, I touched at New South Wales, where I spent a week very agreeably, in shooting off kangaroos' tails with my duelling pistols—very good practice, you know, Hamilton."

"The monster!" murmured Mr. Fitzurse to himself.

"I then went to New Zealand and the Tonga Islands," continued Mr. Darius, "where the chiefs received me with the greatest kindness, and feasted me during three weeks upon men's livers, and young ladies' noses. Don't be alarmed, my dear Jane, they were only black women,

you know, and it does not much matter whether they have noses or not."

"Oh!" said Jane.

"I learnt there to dance their war-dance," continued Mr. Darius, "and could dance it as well as a native. Shall I show it to you now?"

"Oh, by all means, by all means," replied Mr. Fitzurse, who was determined to be as civil as possible.

"Well, then, here's for you," cried Mr. Darius, starting up, and pulling off his coat and waistcoat. "Put back the chairs, quick, quick! Make a circle round, and every one, as I dance, sing as loud as they can bawl, Twang, twang-ho-fung, foodle-looodle-doo. Now begin, now begin. I ought to be naked by rights, but perhaps you'll excuse that.—Now then, twang, twang-ho-fung, foodle-looodle-doo!"

"Twang, twang-ho-fung, foodle-looodle-doo," cried Tom Hamilton, roaring with laughter.

"Tweng, tweng-hoo-fing, tweedle-leedle-doo," cried Mr. Fitzurse, who did not well know what to make of the matter.

"Twang, twang-ho-fung, foodle-looodle-doo," cried Jane, almost in hysterics with excitement, astonishment, and fright.

In the meantime, Mr. Darius began his exhibition, and danced away in the midst, like a bedlamite, jumping five or six feet from the ground, waving his hands, kicking out his feet, contorting his body, grinning diabolically, and shouting forth with the full strength of his lungs, twang, twang-ho-fung, foodle-looodle-doo!

Now he approached Jane, who shrunk into a corner; and after making himself into the image of a Russian spread-eagle, he whirled round seven times upon his heel, like a Turkish dervise. Then he rushed towards Tom Hamilton, and contorted himself into every sort of shape, while Tom literally shrieked with laughter; and then, after spinning round for two or three minutes, like a teetotum, he snatched the poker from the fire-place, brandished it round his head, like the sails of a mill, and darted upon Mr. Fitzurse.

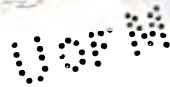
"'Twang, twang-ho-fung, foodle-looodle-doo," shouted Mr. Fitzurse, terrified out of his wits, at the ferocious savage he had brought upon himself.

But the charm seemed to have lost its effect, or Mr. Darius to have gone stark-staring mad, for seizing his unhappy victim by the throat, he cast him prostrate on the ground, shortening the poker at the same time, and vociferating in a sort of hoarse recitative,

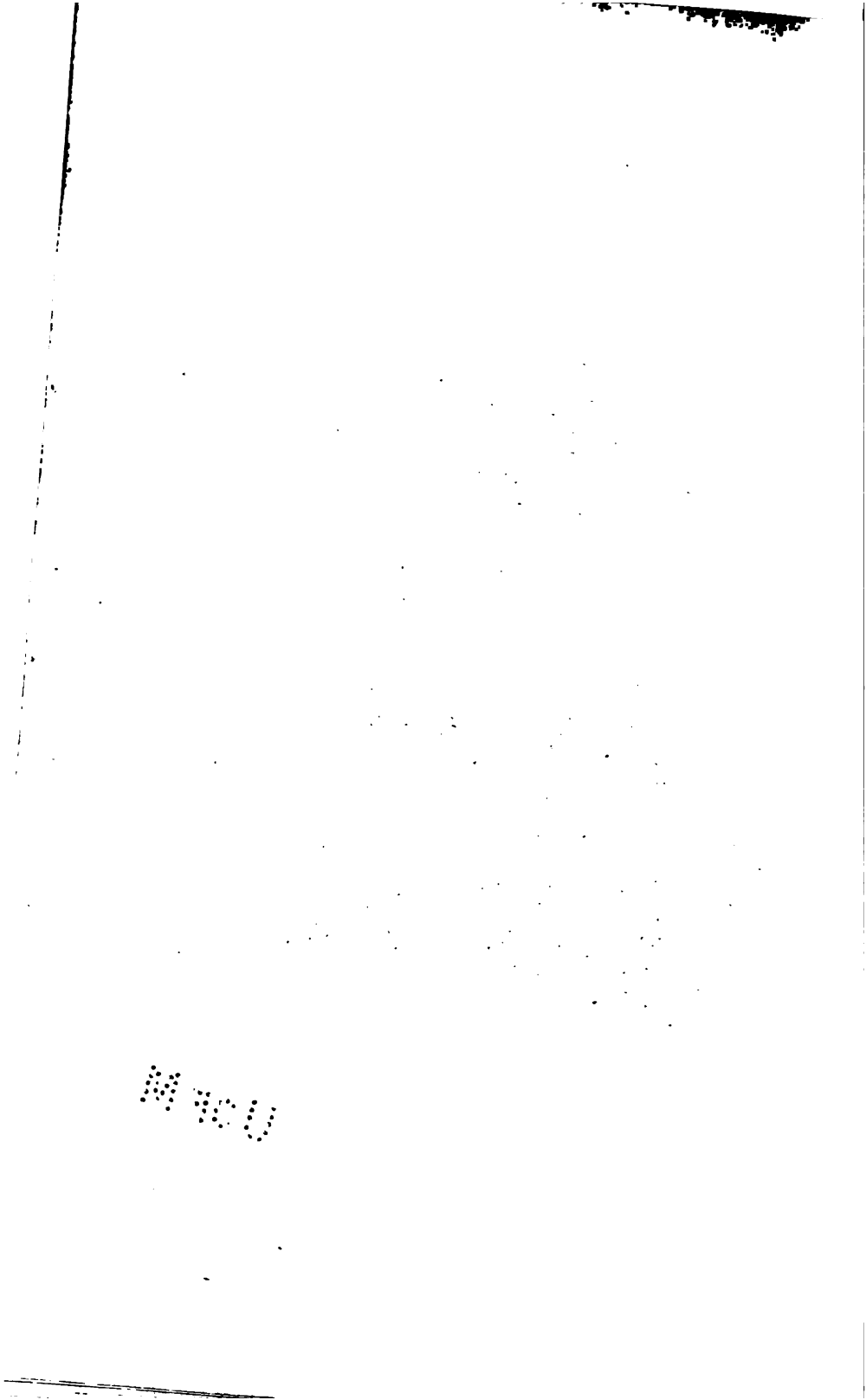
"Now I've got him! now I'll scalp him!
Where's the man that now can help him?"

At that very moment, however, the door of the library opened, and in rushed the viscount, Mr. Winterton, Jerry Tripe, and half-a-dozen lackeys, each exclaiming, "What's the matter? What's the matter? In the name of fortune, what's the matter?"

"Twang, twang-ho-fung, foodle-looodle-doo," cried Tom Hamilton,



The Library



coming forward, and skilfully covering the retreat of Jane by the opposite door. "Only the war-dance of the Tonga Islands, my lord; don't meddle with him! don't meddle with him just at present! I'll soon calm him, I'll soon calm him;" and drawing Mr. Darius off the prostrate Fitzurse, he waved his hand gracefully, saying, "Leave him to me, leave him to me; he'll soon be as gentle as a lamb."

Mr. Fitzurse crept out of the library door upon all-fours, calling to the rest of the party, "Come away, come away, he's the devil incarnate, I think;" and after gazing for a moment in stupified astonishment at Tom Hamilton and Mr. Darius, the viscount and the rest of the party beat their retreat, and left the two to indulge in explosions of laughter, which shook a cloud of dust from the books around.

CHAPTER LI.

AN AFFLICTED FAMILY—THE PROGRESS OF A COOK'S REVENGE—NEW USE OF AN ALARM BELL—RESTORED TRANQUILLITY—THE CHEVALIER PUTS VARIOUS THINGS TOGETHER—A BUTLER'S HEROISM.

AFTER the conclusion of the war-dance of the Tonga Islands, an interval of peace seemed to fall upon Outrun Castle. Tom Hamilton, returning with Mr. Darius to the drawing-room, related to the viscount as much of his friend's history as he thought fit, and explained that, sometimes when dancing the war-dance, a host of memories regarding the fine primeval state of happy innocence in which he had lived amongst the natives of the pacific, would occasionally rush upon him, and make him forget altogether that he had returned to our corrupt and vicious state, he would take all sorts of little liberties with any other human beings who might fall in his way, deprive them of the hair and skin of the upper part of the head, or slightly fracture their skull with any thing which he conceived to be a tomahawk, with the innocent view of making a comfortable meal before he retired to rest.

This explanation did not seem at all satisfactory to the viscount, and whether it was that he did not consider the society of Mr. Darius very desirable, or that the account of his proceedings turned his stomach, he replied to Tom Hamilton's account—

"Very well, Tom, very well, Tom, keep him to yourself, keep him to yourself. By jingo, I don't like such fellows. Chain your bear, man! chain your bear! and send him away as soon as possible: in the meantime I'll go to bed, for I don't feel very easy about the stomach. My craw has been out of order ever since I ate those cursed truffles;"

and away he went, his departure being a signal for the party to disperse, after the arrangement of some plans for the following day between Tom Hamilton, Mr. Darius, and the honourable scion of the house of Outrun.

For about two hours solemn silence dwelt over Outrun Castle; but then some one was heard moving. Shortly after other steps were heard, and doors closed and opened. The viscount, whose eyes had only been shut for half an hour, and had then been forced open again by sundry pains and pinches in the abdominal region, rang his bell exactly at a quarter past three o'clock in the morning; and the good stout cook, who was lying on her back in bed, with her head pillowed on her arm, chuckled till she threw herself into a perspiration at the sound of the tinkling, and muttered—

“Ay, ring away, you'll not have done with it for these six hours, if I'm right. I'd give a groat to see him, that I would. I dare say he's all doubled up, like a boiled lobster.”

In five or ten minutes more the viscount rang again, and Jerry Tripe, who had heard the first bell, but could not conveniently attend to it at the moment, issued forth with a candle in his hand, looking somewhat dolorous himself. At the foot of the staircase, he met Tom Hamilton, who passed him without saying a word. At the first landing-place was Mr. Winterton, who, recognising the butler's face, asked him the way back to his bed-room, received directions and passed on.

“Jerry, Jerry,” said the voice of the Honourable Augustus Frederick, “I wish you'd make me a glass of warm brandy and water; I've got a confounded pain in my stomach.”

“It won't do, sir,” said Jerry; “I've tried it, and I'm worse than before.”

“I should like some, though,” said Mr. Fitzurse, with a strange contortion of countenance.

“There goes my lord's bell again,” cried Jerry; “he's got a pain, too, I'll bet any money;” and away he went to the viscount's chamber, and found his lord and master sitting up in bed under his nightcap, with his eyes rolling wildly in his head, and his two hands clasped upon his goodly paunch.

“Why, are you all drunk, or deaf, or stupid?” cried the peer. “Here am I with the devil of a colic, and I can get nobody to come to me. Get me some fomentations; I shall die, I'm sure I shall die! Where's Freddy—where's my son?”

“He's got the colic, too,” said Jerry, “and so have I, and so has every body, I think—I'm sure those copper saucepans are not rightly tinned—the kitchen-maid doesn't clean them properly.”

“By jingo, I'll horsewhip her,” cried the peer; “make some fomentations, I say; I shall die I'm sure! I never was so twisted to pieces in my life; send Freddy here; I should like to give him my blessing before I go.”

“His blessing!” said Jerry Tripe, lolling his tongue into his cheek, and shrugging his shoulder as he walked out of the room.

But before he had well delivered his message to Mr. Fitzurse, the viscount's bell rang again, and the young gentleman and the butler

hastening back together, found the peer sitting on the edge of the bed, much in the same situation of a classical gentleman called "my man John," having "one stocking off and one stocking on," but labouring evidently under a physical incapability of putting on the other; for every time he attempted to draw it over his foot, he was seized with a violent and painful contortion, which caused him to kick the stocking half across the room.

"I'm going, my dear boy!" he cried; "I'm going! I've got such an infernal pain in the stomach, I'm sure I'm going."

"If that's any sign, I'm going with you," said Mr. Fitzurse; "for I've got such cramps all over here"—and he spread his hands over the suffering part—"that I can scarcely hold myself up; and so has Tom Hamilton, too, for he's wandering about just like a ghost."

"What can we do?" cried the viscount, who had obtained a moment's relief.

"Ugh!" I don't know," replied his son, whose turn it was to suffer, and who was now writhing like an eel on an eel-spear.

"Would your lordship like some punch?" said Jerry Tripe, with an eye to his own benefit.

"Punch?" cried the viscount; "that's just the thing—"

"Punch cures the gout, the colic, and the phthisic,
And it is to every man the very best of physick."

"Get the punch, get the punch, Jerry."

"Send for a doctor," groaned Mr. Fitzurse; "send for that damned old fellow Longshanks; he's a knowing hand; I can't bear this; it's arsenic, I'm sure."

"Get the punch, Jerry, get the punch," cried the peer. "By jingo, it's coming on again, and I must have something to support nature."

Jerry moved a step towards the door, but ere he reached it he tottered, a sudden pang shot through his viscera, and despite of his reverence for his superiors, he sank into a chair, drawing his knees up to his chin, and grinning horribly a ghastly smile.

"I can't," he cried, "I can't! I shall never reach the pantry."

"What's to be done?" cried the peer.

"Oh!" roared Jerry.

"Ring the alarm bell," said Mr. Fitzurse.

By jingo, we must have some help," replied his father; and both making a desperate dart at the door together, they rushed into the passage, where hung the rope of the great bell; and catching it in a convulsive grasp, they tolled a peal that made the country round ring for miles.

An instant commotion was created in the house, and every soul in it but the cook was soon a-foot. How she did chuckle as she lay in bed! The first who appeared was Tom Hamilton; then came Mr. Darius: Mr. Winterton, who had ate more, appeared last among the guests. The maids and men, who had fared at the same table with the cook, were all comfortably buried in the arms of slumber; but the

continual ringing of the alarm bell soon brought the whole household to the door of their lord's chamber. Punch was manufactured ; fomentations were prepared, and a messenger was sent off for Mr. Longshanks, bearing a sad and doleful account of the state of Outrun Castle and its inhabitants.

The peer, Tom Hamilton, Mr. Darius, and Mr. Fitzurse, drank deep, and certainly received a degree of relief, but still the potent moving cause within them gave them very little internal peace till about nine o'clock the next morning, when some repose began to come upon them, and Tom Hamilton, who felt his high manly powers somewhat degraded by the peculiar sort of torture he had suffered, walked off to bed, saying as little upon the subject as possible.

"I theenk I could fall asleep now," said the honourable scion.

"Ay, do go and try, Freddy," said the peer ; "I'll get a nap, too, if I can. I wish that fellow Longshanks would come, for I declare there must be something wrong with those pots and kettles."

Ere these proposed manœuvres could be carried into execution, while Mr. Fitzurse was undergoing one final pinch, and the peer paused at his bedside, asking himself if it were not coming back again, the bell at the great door rang, and Mr. Longshanks, followed by the Chevalier de Lunatico, walked into the hall of Outrun Castle.

"How is your master, puppy?" demanded the surgeon of the footman who opened the door.

"Very bad, sir," replied the man, who knew Mr. Longshanks's humour, and did not venture to quarrel with the epithet he bestowed upon him.

"Well, if he's not dead," said Mr. Longshanks, "it's a good thing for him, and a bad thing for the country. I suppose this gentleman can't speak with him?"

"Lord bless you, sir," replied the man.

"Well, I must see somebody," said the chevalier ; "so my good friend, have the kindness to tell one Jeremiah, *alias* Jerry Tripe, to speak with me for a moment or two;" and tapping his boot gently with his riding-whip, the chevalier looked with his peculiar impressive and commanding expression in the man's countenance.

"Why, Jerry's well nigh as bad as my lord," replied the servant ; "but I think he's a little better now, for I saw him sitting in the pantry, with a cloth over his face, to keep the flies off his nose ; and he was snoring so hard, that he blew the napkin up and down, and made a sort of fan of it."

"Then he's either better, or in a fit of apoplexy," said Mr. Longshanks ; "and you may wake him in either case—if you can. While I go and see that old fool the peer, you go into the drawing-room, chevalier, and see that old knave the butler ; if you can make any thing of him, you're a wiser man than I take you to be, or a greater rogue than himself."

The chevalier stepped lightly along into the drawing-room, which, as he expected, he found untenanted ; and as he was one of those men who never waste a minute, he looked round for something with which

to amuse or instruct himself. Two or three small pictures were the first things that caught his eye. There was the portrait of the viscount, when he was young, representing him as rather a good-looking, swaggering, rakehelly dare-devil—to use two or three good old words, now nearly obsolete—with a horsewhip in his hand. Then there was another portrait, an inscription under which pronounced it to be the likeness of Catherine Viscountess Outrun, one of those pale-eyed, hyena-looking women, who require the resources of matrimony to carry off the superabundant virulence of their spleen upon their husband and children; or woe betide the neighbourhood which they inhabit in a state of celibacy. Then came a third, a young lady in a joeseph, representing the same personage whose portrait we have already described in the picture gallery.

The reader may recollect, perhaps, that the chevalier had never beheld that portrait, but the one which was now before him he contemplated for several minutes with great interest. A peculiar expression came into his face; he laid the index of his right hand upon his proboscis, then took a thoughtful turn up the room, and then returned to the picture.

A few seconds more seemed to satisfy him on that score, and his eyes fell upon a large book which lay, somewhat dusty, under one of the old-fashioned carved and gilt pier tables. He took it out, laid it down before him, and opened it. It was a Bible, bearing date 1660; and in a large blank leaf in the beginning was a long list of names and dates, showing it to be one of those old family bibles in which fond parents chronicle the births of their children—sad records, in the end, of every mortal joy and hope.

The chevalier run his eye down the list, and read a brief account of several Barons Fitzurse; then perceived how they became Viscounts Outrun; but that was a matter of very little interest to him, so he went to the end of the list, at which he found the name of the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus. About him he cared not two straws, as the reader may well believe, but the name that stood above was one which seemed to please him better, for his eye rested on it thoughtfully. It was a lady's name, and stood immediately under that of the viscount, with some ten or twelve years between them, and as he read it over for the fifth time, he rubbed the tip of his finger slowly backwards and forwards on a bald place upon his temple, and then walked up to the picture again, and took another look at it.

While he was still gazing, the door opened, and in came Jerry Tripe. Jerry was evidently better; whatever it was that had affected him had lost its power, and though his face was, perhaps, a shade paler, the jewel that he carried on his head less brilliant, the "lantern in his poop" less resplendent, still he bore a bright and cheerful countenance, and came in with a step of wonderful elasticity.

"Ah, Mr. Lunny," he cried, "I'm glad to see you. How wags the world with you, old gentleman? We have had one or two sad bouts of it since you and I last met. I haven't had a moonlight ramble, or what I call a frolic, for I don't know the day; so the exchequer's very

empty. You have not got a few pictures of his majesty, set in gold, to give away, have you, my dear shuveleer?"

"It depends upon circumstances," said the chevalier drily. "I have got a twenty-pound note in my pocket for any one who chooses to give me a few true answers to a question or two I have to put to them."

"That's it, that's it," replied Jerry, putting his hands in his breeches pockets, and gazing in the face of the chevalier with what may be called an up-to-any-thing expression of countenance; "that's it, that's it! Put your questions, old gentleman, put your questions! You be Oddipus, and I'll be the Minx, as the classical gentlemen call it."

The chevalier advanced a step towards him, laid his finger on his arm, and said, "Come here!" Then advanced slowly to the picture of the lady in the joseph, pointed his digit towards it, and said, "Who is that?"

"Why my lord's sister as was, to be sure," replied Mr. Tripe; "didn't you know that, old gentleman?"

The chevalier made no reply to this last innocent interrogatory of Mr. Tripe's, but led him to the table, pointed to the name in the book, and then to the picture.

Jerry Tripe nodded.

"When did you last see her son?" demanded the chevalier.

The whole fat mass of Jerry Tripe started profoundly; and he gaped in the face of the chevalier, without a word of answer.

Come, come," cried Mr. de Lunatico, "tell me all about it!"

Now, strange to say, and hardly to be believed, Jeremiah Tripe, Esquire, had his own peculiar notions of honour. Almost everybody has some certain dark corner of the heart, in which the unhappy and defeated remnant that remains unkilld of the army of good feelings and high principles with which we usually commence the warfare of the world, takes refuge, as a last strong-hold, to be defended to the utmost. Such was the case with Jerry Tripe. He was not particularly famous for principles of any kind; but he would not betray his master. He shook his head resolutely, saying—

"No, no, old gentleman, that won't do! Any thing about myself that you like; but hang it, I won't blab."

"A twenty-pound note!" said the chevalier.

"Not for twenty thousand," replied Jerry Tripe.

"I suppose you know I can hang you, if I like?" observed the chevalier.

"Not unlikely," answered Jerry Tripe; "but I don't think you'll do it."

"As sure as you and I are alive," replied the chevalier; "for to the bottom of this bad business I will get."

"I'll die game!" answered Jerry Tripe, without a moment's consideration, and away he walked out of the room.

CHAPTER LII.

NOUS REVENONS A NOS MOUTONS—THE READER IS INSTRUCTED IN THE WAY TO GET ON—LAURA ENTERTAINS ARISTOCRATICAL NOTIONS—WHAT IS PRODUCED IN THE EPIGASTRIC REGION OF FANCY FOOTMEN—A TALL MAN DOES TOWARDS HER WHAT MOST MORTALS DO TOWARDS THEMSELVES, MISTAKES HER WANTS—HOW TO JUDGE OF A MAN'S MASTER.

WE have done great injustice to Laura Longmore—we have left her for three or four chapters without saying one single word of her fate and fortunes; and even now, reader, we can but bestow a short space upon her, as we are hurrying rapidly towards the end of the first part of the chevalier's memoirs, and to the sad consummation of that history with which his adventures have been so intimately bound up. We left Laura Longmore then, pretty Laura Longmore, running over the corner of a ploughed field, towards a village church which rose up from some trees at a little distance. Her course was the image of human life, reader, or rather of human desires, for eager to get at her object, Laura's delicate small feet tripped rapidly over the furrows, stumbling at this clod, tumbling over that ridge, sinking into the soft ground, and cutting themselves against the hard stones, till she found, as every one else will find, if they try, that, *The way to get on quickly, is not to go too fast.* It is a sage apothegm, reader, which I commend to your kindly consideration. If you be young you have it to learn, if you be old you have learnt it already.

She slackened her pace towards the end of the field, she picked her steps from ridge to ridge, and she made twice the way in the same time that she made before. At the end of the field, as I have before assured the reader, there was a small path crossing a clover field, and then a hedge with a stile, and then another field with two men ploughing in it. While she was going through the clover field, Laura continued in a great fright, with her heart beating at a terrible rate, and her eyes every two or three steps turned over her shoulder to see if the madman was pursuing her; but when she had crossed the stile and saw the two labourers, she asked herself whether she should run up to them and claim their protection, or proceed straight-forward to the village which was now close at hand, and seek shelter in the first house she could find. She determined upon the latter course, for notwithstanding all she had heard and read of, concerning the higher orders of society, she had got a notion, which, perhaps, was not quite so incorrect after all as it may appear at first sight in this democratic age—that the spirit of chivalry is not altogether extinct in the bosoms of the gentlemen of England, and that it is no bad thing in its way when one can find it.

She walked on then, and passed through a gate into a little country lane with a hedge on either side. Soon after, she came to another gate, but this was of a different kind, for it was of that size, shape, and complexion, which usually gives entrance to the grounds of a gentleman's house. It was a neat, fresh-painted gate, pleasant to

look upon, and it led into a nice gravel walk of about a hundred yards in length, at the end of which one came to a carriage sweep and the door of a house with a little pointed porch covered with ivy. Laura Longmore looked four or five times at the bell before she could make up her mind to ring it, but at length thinking, "Surely no gentleman will refuse me shelter and protection," she took heart of grace and gave it a good pull.

The bell rang loud enough, but it was unsuccessful in bringing any respondent to the door. Laura determined to try again after waiting some five minutes, and this time she succeeded in bringing forth a tall, grim, supercilious-looking man, in a grey coat with brass buttons, bearing in the centre of them the head of some sort of beast, such as never was, and probably never will be seen in living form upon the earth. The tall footman looked at the young lady from head to foot, and seeing that she was dressed in somewhat anomalous apparel, he instantly conceived that it was an excellent opportunity of venting some of that superabundant insolence which is generated in large quantities in the epigastric region, just between the spleen and the liver of all fancy footmen, and is supposed to proceed from drinking strong ale and the ends of bottles of Madeira, together with the relics of patties and *vol-au-vents*.

"You seem in a mighty hurry, good woman," said the tall footman; "pray what may be your very pressing business, and who do you want?"

Now the last question was a puzzling one to Laura Longmore, for as she had not the most distant idea of whose was the door at which she stood, she could by no means specify the person whom she wished to see.

"I desire to speak either to your master or your mistress," she replied, after a little hesitation, taking it for granted that every house had either a master or a mistress.

The man grinned contemptuously.

"My lady is not up," he said, "and won't be up for this three hours; and as for my master the doctor, the reverend gentleman's busy, and won't like to be disturbed for such a one as you—though he has no objection to a pretty face either."

"I should wish to see him, nevertheless," replied Laura Longmore, somewhat indignant. "I rather suspect you mistake what I am."

"No, no," replied the man, with a sneer, "there's no mistake, I see what you are well enough. It's you have come to the wrong house, young woman, so you may take your letter, or petition, or whatever it is somewhere else. My master's not such a fool as to attend to any thing like that. If he did see you he would only commit you for a vagrant, so you had better be off."

Poor Laura burst into tears, but the fancy footman continued—

"Come, come, don't stand blubbing there. If you want a fool's house where you'll be listened to, you must walk a mile down the lane, there you'll see a place on the right-hand side with a flower garden round it. It belongs to an oddity, who'll damn your eyes, and most likely give you half a guinea. Nobody was ever turned away there, for the servants are as big fools as the master."

Thus saying he went in and shut the door, and Laura retreated down the gravel walk, resolved to take her way to what he called the fool's house, not doubting that, perhaps she had escaped worse treatment by not seeing the tall footman's reverend master; for if the Spanish proverb be a true one—"tell me the man's company and I will tell you the man," we might with almost equal justice say in England, "Show me the servant, and I will tell you the master."

CHAPTER LIII.

THE TEMPER OF MOONLIGHT—A CORN-LAW LECTURE—THE CHEVALIER IN THE WAY—MR. DARIUS UNDERTAKES MORE THAN HE CAN MANAGE—A SHOCKING MISTAKE.

HAVING now done justice to Laura Langmore, though not that ample justice which our hearts would prompt us to show to one so sweet and amiable, we must turn to a person no less important whom we left in a certain chamber of Outrun Castle.

The chevalier stood tapping his boot with his riding cane. He was not astonished at the determination of Jerry Tripe. No, reader, he was not astonished. To be astonished at any thing was quite out of the cool, calm, reasoning character of the Chevalier de Lunatico. *Nil admirari* is the motto of the moon. Look at the light of the beautiful planet, reader, as it rests calm upon a bank; there is nothing like astonishment in that! Look at it as it floods the landscape before your eyes, picking out tower and town, wood and stream. Dark shadows and bright lights there are, but it is all cool, tranquil, and contemplative. Look at it as it dances upon yon sparkling sea; light and brilliant as melted diamonds it certainly is, but still there is a graceful peacefulness in it—nothing sudden—nothing startling—nothing having the least affinity with surprise. No, no, the Chevalier de Lunatico could not be astonished at any thing; the moon-light that was in him prevented that. He stood tapping his boot then, as we have said, with his riding cane, saying to himself, "Well, we will see. My friend, Jeremiah, you shall proceed to the county jail, and, moreover, you shall have the benefit of a trial. Then if you still remain obdurate, what's to be done with you next? Why, I must send you to the moon, I suppose, for undoubtedly under those circumstances you will well deserve a ticket."

As he thus paused and thought the door opened, and a thin atrabitious-looking gentleman sauntered in with a somewhat languid and lack-a-daisical air. He looked at the chevalier with that sort of glance which an Englishman always bestows upon any unfortunate stranger he

may chance to find in the same house with himself—a sort of “Are-you-a-pick-pocket?” expression of countenance. With a great deal of shyness, a great deal of apprehension, and a great deal of self-sufficiency in it—a kind of mithradate composed of many things, and a perfect antidote to all low acquaintances. The chevalier returned the glance with his usual cool composure, having that light touch of superciliousness in it, which his high functions and great powers very well justified; but Mr. Winterton, for he was the personage who entered, immediately felt under the influence of Mr. de Lunatico’s eye a strong inclination to approximate himself to his diplomatic neighbour, and being also moved by another passion called hunger, he said in a sweet and mellifluous tone—

“Pray, sir, can you tell me if breakfast is ready?”

“I am not aware,” replied the Chevalier de Lunatico; “but, it does appear to me that you have some need of what the French call ‘restauration.’”

“Indeed I have,” cried Mr. Winterton, feelingly. “The fact is, we have all been suffering diabolically during the night by a certain spasmodic affection, for which I can find no appropriate term in the English language, but which was called by the Romans ‘*Tormina*.’”

“Ah,” said the chevalier, “you mean the gripes.”

“Precisely,” said Mr. Winterton.

“And may I ask,” said the chevalier, “what was the cause of this complaint?”

“If it had affected myself alone,” said Mr. Winterton, “I might have conceived that it was indignation at the manner in which the verses I recited were received, but every one in the whole house was as ill as myself.”

“Do you not think,” said the chevalier, in a philosophical tone, “that your verses might give them the gripes, and their inattention give them to you? I have known such an effect in verses before. Recollect there are certain causes which act and re-act upon each other.”

“No, sir, no,” cried Mr. Winterton, highly indignant; “my verses were upon the infamous corn-laws, those horrible and detestable laws which starve the millions, and they were of such a sublime and affecting nature that they might touch the bowels of the most hard-hearted.”

“That is exactly the effect I attribute to them,” replied the chevalier; “but pray let me hear a little more of these corn-laws, my dear sir. Some of your laws are funny things in this country, I know.”

“Why, you must understand,” said Mr. Winterton, “that those rascals, the farmers, in time of war, when we could get little or no grain from any other part of the world, laid out a great deal of money in improving the land and rendering it capable of supplying the whole country, or well nigh the whole country, with corn. Well, then, we have a heavy national debt, and the farmer is obliged to pay in taxes his share of the interest. Thus, you see what, between what he has spent himself, like a fool as he was, and what other people have spent for him, it is utterly impossible that he can produce corn at the same price as foreign farmers can produce it, and that if the ports were open

for foreign farmers to throw in their corn, the English farmer must be ruined, and go to the dogs or the devil."

"A very pleasant consummation for him," said the chevalier.¹

"Well," continued Mr. Winterton, "such being the case you see, a set of rogues and fools have tried to prevent that by putting duties upon the entrance of foreign corn, so that the English farmer can just repay himself. The moment the price gets high the duty falls, and in comes the foreign corn; so long as the price is low the duty is high, and foreign corn is kept out."

"And what is the result?" said the chevalier.

"Why this," replied Mr. Winterton, "our manufacturers are obliged to give higher wages to their labourers or artizans, or call them what you will, consequently they cannot produce goods at as cheap a rate as they otherwise could, consequently they cannot sell them so cheap to foreign nations, and consequently——consequently——consequently——"

"Go on," said the chevalier.

"Why, consequently they cannot make so much money," said Mr. Winterton.

"That's a pity," said the chevalier. "I suppose, then, all your principal manufacturers are terribly poor devils, without a shilling in their pockets to bless themselves?"

"Oh, dear, no," cried Mr. Winterton; indignantly, "they are as rich as Croesus, rolling in wealth! They do occasionally ruin themselves with over speculation and over production, it is true; but in general they are made of money. That's the reason I am fond of them."

"Then, I suppose," said the chevalier, "they are in fact a race of wealthy philanthropists who originally set out with immense property, and daily see it decreasing in their efforts to encourage manufactures by carrying on trade even at a loss to themselves. They all begin trade, of course, with five or six hundred thousand pounds in their pockets?"

"Oh, dear, no," replied Mr. Winterton, "you are mistaken altogether: in almost every instance they have been the artizans of their own fortune—a noble reputation, sir. I scarcely know one instance in which either the actual mill-owner or his father did not either commence business with little or nothing, or borrowed his capital to begin with."

"And now they are rolling in riches?" said the chevalier.

"Exactly," replied Mr. Winterton.

"But the farmer of course is still more wealthy," said Mr. de Lunatico.

"Nonsense," cried Mr. Winterton; "he is a poor devil who can scarcely live. You never heard of such a thing as a farmer making a fortune."

"Indeed!" replied the chevalier. "Then let me ask you another question. Are there most people employed in manufactures or in agriculture?"

"In agriculture, of course," replied his companion.

"And is the home trade or the foreign trade in your manufactures the most important?" asked the chevalier.

"Oh, the home trade, of course," replied Mr. Winterton.

"Ha," said the chevalier, "I understand the matter now perfectly. The manufacturer makes an immense profit by his goods, and pays

his artizans as little as possible. He wishes to make his profits more and to pay his artizans less, and in this laudable endeavour he is frustrated by the protection given to the farmer for the expense and labour he has been at in cultivation, and the taxes he is obliged to pay. It is a very great pity, indeed, that in order to reduce the wages of his workmen, and thereby increase the sale of his goods that he cannot ruin both agriculturist and landowner altogether. Why does he not get all his workmen to rise suddenly some dark night and butcher all the farmers and landlords throughout the country in their sleep? That would be the plan we should follow in the moon, I think; for you see lunatics would never take into consideration that by destroying the farmers and landlords we should ruin the home trade. Why don't your friends do so?"

"Oh, no, no," replied Mr. Winterton, "we manage much better than that. You forget there are troops in the country, and laws, and magistrates: no, no; what we do is, we tell the artizans that if we get the corn laws abolished they will have cheap bread. We tell them moreover, that cheap bread will not produce the least diminution in their wages. Then we go and tell the House of Commons that cheap bread will produce lower wages, and lower wages cheap goods; and cheap goods extended markets; and if we find that the House of Commons won't listen to us, we take every opportunity of making the people discontented. We diminish their profits, we grind them down with house rent, and frame rent, and charges for gas. We make them buy at our shops, and pay them their wages as seldom as possible in order that they may run in debt, and when the market is glutted we do not decrease the number of hours that they work so as to diminish the production; but we decrease the price we pay per piece, so that we get the same quantity of stuff but pay them less for it, and then whatever we do that depresses or grieves them, we say, 'It is all the corn laws,' and assure them that we are deeply distressed and anxious to improve their condition, that we commiserate their sufferings, and are grieved beyond all conception at their starvation; but that a horribly corrupt parliament will not sweep away the corn laws for fear of ruining the farmers and destroying the home trade. Thus we urge them on till some time or another they will rise and make such an outcry that all the members of both houses of parliament will be frightened out of their wits, and sacrifice at one blow the agricultural interests to that of the great manufacturers."

"But don't you think," said the chevalier, "that the artizans will find you out, and when they rise, as you purpose, will attack the great manufacturers first? I have generally remarked that people of that kind, when excited too far go direct to remedy the most pressing evil before they strike at the remote cause, and I should think that they would first attack and punish those who starve them by decreasing their wages before they carried their views any farther."

"Indeed! do you think so?" cried Mr. Winterton, in a terrible perspiration.

"Yes, indeed," replied the chevalier; "and so much am I convinced

of it that I will beg you to present these tickets to the principal persons who are moving in this matter, as they are decided subjects of the moon, and their presence is required at St. Luke's. I will also beg you, my dear sir, to bestow these other tickets upon those philosophical speculators who think that a great and heavy injury inflicted upon any large body of the inhabitants of any country can be really beneficial to any other part, especially those who have held such doctrines about the corn laws; for by your own showing it seems quite clear to me that to do away those laws suddenly, and without some compensating reduction of taxation to the farmer, would ruin not only the chief agriculturist, but all the immense mass of people connected with agriculture, from the landlord to the labourer; while on the other hand, even the immediate gain would only be to a few hundred great manufacturers whose artizans would not be suffered to benefit in the slightest degree whatsoever."

"But ——" said Mr. Winterton.

"I understand what you are going to say," said the chevalier, "and I do not in the slightest degree mean to assert that if there be a possibility of diminishing the general burdens which press upon all classes of the community alike, the amount of protection given to the farmer should not be diminished in that exact proportion; for the only pretext for affording him the protection he receives, seems to be the impossibility of his competing with countries where no such burdens exist. The diminution of the protection would then be beneficial to all classes of the community, and be a blessing to the nation instead of a boon to a gorged and greedy few, who are already over wealthy and are only seeking to be more so. As it is, the motto upon their banners instead of cheap bread, ought to be *semper avurus eget*."

As the chevalier spoke a head was popped into the room, and was instantly drawn back again.

"Mr. Fitzurse with black whiskers and a black wig," said the chevalier to himself.

The next moment Tom Hamilton's head was popped in and withdrawn; and a minute after Mr. Darius put several feet of his length through the half-open door-way, saying, "Winterton, Winterton, come here, I want to speak with you."

Glad of an excuse to get away from an unpleasant companion, Mr. Winterton bowed to the chevalier and quitted the room. At the back of the door he found the three personages whose successive appearance and sudden occultation had been remarked by Mr. de Lunatico. They were all holding a busy consultation together, Tom Hamilton saying, "I tell you it is, I know him quite well. If he sees you he'll nose the whole matter."

"That demmed nose of his is long enough for any thing," said Mr. Fitzurse; "but he caen't stop me if he does."

"But he may tell your father, and your father can," said Tom Hamilton.

"Well, I caen't go without my breakfast," said Mr. Fitzurse; "I am peculiar queer about the head and stomach."

"Is there no other way into the breakfast-room?" said Mr. Darius. "No," answered the honourable scion; "that demned fool Tripe, told the footman to lay it in there."

"You go in, Mr. Darius," said Tom Hamilton; "and wheedle him away into the library. Get up some story—you can easily do that."

"In an instant," said Mr. Darius, "you ensconce yourself at the back of the staircase."

"Take care what you are about," said Tom Hamilton, "I don't know how, but that fellow gets one to tell him every thing in a minute."

"Never fear, never fear," said Mr. Darius, with an air of conscious capacity, "if he gets me to tell him any thing but what I choose, he's worse than Baron Garrow, Harry Brougham, or Charley Phillips," and while the rest of the party took shelter underneath the staircase, he walked boldly in to confront the Chevalier de Lunatico.

Thou art a bold man indeed, Mr. Darius, but, alas, how wonderfully does all thine impudence melt away under the great diplomatist's countenance. With his teeth shut, his lips slightly curled, his left eye somewhat screwed up, and his pale, clear, dry skin slightly wrinkled, Mr. de Lunatico stood and gazed upon him with so meaning a face that Mr. Darius began to fancy he had heard the whole conversation through the door. To give himself time to rally, the magnanimous Darius made the chevalier a low bow. The chevalier drew his two heels gracefully together, dropped his arms, and bowed his head as if he were going to dance a minuet. Mr. Darius found that that mode of attack would not do, and feeling his self-confidence beginning to ooze out of the palms of his hands like the courage of Bob Acres he determined to push a face, and advancing gracefully, he said, "Sir, I have something to show you."

"Pray, sir, what is it?" said the chevalier.

"Why, nothing at all," replied Mr. Darius, under the influence of the chevalier's peculiar powers, "but simply you know, sir," he continued, making a great effort for a lie, "I am one of the greatest chemists that ever lived. When I was in the valley of Hunderabad, which you know is north and by west of Cabul about a hundred and twenty miles, I frightened the Rajah and all his court, and made them take me for a magician. With my grand electrical machine I showed them all the wonders of electrical magnetism. I exhibited to them an immense mass of soft iron encircled by manifold plies of copper wire, and I made them all put their daggers and scimitars underneath it, and crying in a loud and solemn voice, 'Daggers and scimitars, stand up,' I united the wire to the electrical machine, and up stood all the daggers and scimitars on end. Then I cried, 'Daggers and scimitars, lie down,' and down they lay as flat as pancakes. But I did more, I made the magnet take up the great cannon of Hunderabad which weighs nine hundred tons, and fires a ball of nine hundred pound's weight—just a pound to a ton you will remark. But moreover —"

"You told them a great many other lies," said Mr. de Lunatico, quietly, "just such as you are telling me at the present moment.—"

Don't look fierce at me, sir. I never insult any man without being quite ready to give him satisfaction; but be good enough, if you please, to tell me this moment, what you and my good friend Tom Hamilton, and my honourable friend Mr. Fitzurse have been concocting together."

"Nay, my good sir—nay, my dear sir—nay, my honourable friend," said Mr. Darius in a state of much trepidation.

"I insist upon it," said Mr. de Lunatico; "I should be sorry to have recourse to violent measures, but ——"

"Well, well then," said his long companion, "if I am under compulsion I must tell. They are going this moment, that is to say, as soon as they have got some breakfast, to get a marriage licence for Mr. Fitzurse, to be married to-morrow morning."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the chevalier surprised and horrified. "But where is the bride? Are you quite sure that you have got the bride?"

"Oh, quite sure of that," replied Mr. Darius laughing, "I saw her not a minute ago in the little room behind the dining-room."

"And pray, may I ask, are all the parties willing?" demanded the chevalier, fancying that it was of Laura Longmore Mr. Darius was talking all the time, for he it remarked that nobody could cheat the great diplomatist *but himself*. "No compulsion I hope, sir."

"Oh dear, no—oh dear, no," replied Mr. Darius, "a little fright and all that at one time, but now they are all quite content. By Jove, to see these young people you would think that marriage was the finest thing in the world, nothing but laughing, and talking, and squeezing of hands"

"Frailty, thy name is woman," said the chevalier after Hamlet.

"But," Mr. Darius continued, "you must not say a word, my dear chevalier, you know it's a profound secret, and if they knew I had told they would eat me up."

"A large mouthful, and not a savoury one," said the chevalier; "and now what was it you wanted to show me?"

"Nothing at all," replied the Mede, "but I just wanted you to walk into another room, for the breakfast is in that one there, you see, and there's no way into that room but through this, so ——"

"Oh, I will walk into another room directly," answered the chevalier, and taking up his hat he marched straight into the breakfast-room, helped himself to a slice of ham, poured out a cup of coffee, and sat quietly down to the morning meal.

CHAPTER LIV.

LEFT IN THE LURCH—THE PEER'S MAGNANIMITY—THE MISTAKE CONFIRMED—
THE MARCH OF THE FORCES—HUNT THE HARE—JERRY CAUGHT.

THE second cup of coffee was finished, the second slice of ham had disappeared, and the Chevalier de Lunatico said to himself, "Upon my life, this doctor is so long I must go and seek him, or, at all events, fulfil my mission. He must be an unskilful medico, this Mr. Longshanks. There is not a physician in all London who would not have killed his man in half the time."

Thus saying, he took up his hat, smoothed the crown of it thoughtfully with the sleeve of his coat, and was approaching the bell as if for the purpose of ringing it, when he suddenly heard the sounds of

"Ugh, ugh, ugh! By jingo, that's good—Damme, I'm better. Where's Tom Hamilton? Is he puling up in his room still? Where's Freddy—that's to say, my nevy Judas? Where's Jerry Tripe? Where are all the people? By jingo, I think they are 'into thin air dissolved.'"

"Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Fitzurse have gone out, my lord," replied a footman's voice, "after having had a little coffee in the back kitchen. Jerry Tripe is in the pantry, and says he is rather qualmish."

"And who the deuce have we got here?" cried the viscount entering the room? By jingo, it's my old friend, the chevalier. How d'ye do, how d'ye do, chevalier? you're a gallant old cock as ever I should wish to see. So come sit down and have some breakfast. Help yourself and your friends will love ye."

"I have taken the liberty of helping myself," replied the chevalier; "but, may I ask, where is Mr. Longshanks?"

"Oh, he's been gone this half hour," replied the peer. "He told me there was nothing the matter with me but sin and indigestion, and went away in a huff. By jingo, I believe he was right, for a small glass of neat cogniac cured the indigestion, and as sin is a chronic complaint, it must have its own course."

"He seems totally to have forgotten that he left me here then," said the chevalier.

"Most likely, most likely," replied the viscount; "but how came you with him? Are you hunting in couples? By jingo, if you do that, chevalier, what between you with your pistols, and he with his pill-box, there won't be a live man left in the country. They'll call you death and the doctor as you go along. Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"I only met Mr. Longshanks by chance," said the chevalier. "I was coming with a message to your lordship."

"Oh it's to me this time," cried the viscount. "Well, what is it? The sandy lane?—Half-past five o'clock in the morning? Well, by jingo, I'm quite ready!—Never minded a cool blaze in my life."

"Your lordship mistakes the nature of my errand," said the chevalier. "I am sent here by the magistrates assembled at the Half Moon, in the village of Outrun, to require that your lordship would immediately restore Miss Laura Longmore to her father, upon your consenting to do which all farther proceedings will be stayed. But if you refuse, a warrant for your apprehension and that of your son, will be immediately issued, and likewise a warrant for searching Outrun Castle. I wait your lordship's reply."

The viscount had turned even redder than usual in the face, and, to say truth, he looked excessively fierce, but the chevalier, as the reader well knows, was armed, and well prepared for all contingencies. He was as cool as a cucumber! and saw the angry spot upon the peer's brow with as much equanimity as a Whig talks of the new poor law.

"By jingo, that's good," cried Lord Outrun. "Damme, the fellows threaten me, do they. Tell them, with my compliments, that I will give them no answer at all except at the lash of the horsewhip. Let them issue their warrant, and if they come here I'll cudgel them all so soundly that 'Justice of Peace' shall become another name for marmelade all through the country."

"Might it not be better for your lordship," said the chevalier in an equable tone, "to say that Miss Longmore is not here?"

"No, by jingo, I won't say any thing of the kind," said his lordship. "Tell them they're a pack of nincompoops, and deserve the drubbing they shall certainly get if they come here."

"I have the honour of taking my leave," said the chevalier, making a low bow.

The peer stuck his hands under his coat tails, and bowed with a stiff back as far as his stomach would let him. The chevalier then retreated from the room, mounted his horse, and rode out through the park.

"She's there," said the chevalier to himself, after two or three minutes' consideration. "How could the surgeon make such a mistake? She must be there I think. However, I'll 'make assurance double sure,' 'tis but a mile or two round," and on the chevalier rode till he came up to the gate of a certain house, which, if the reader had seen it, he would instantly have recognised as the dwelling-place of Mr. Longshanks.

There was a boy standing at the gate, performing the curious operation which is called lolloping. There was a fine simplicity in the expression of his countenance bordering upon the unideal, and the chevalier conceiving him to be a fit vehicle for diplomatic communication, he entered into conversation with him without passing the gate.

"Pray, my man," he said, "can you do me the honour of telling me if a young lady named Miss Longmore is staying in this house?"

"I doan't know," replied the boy, "but I'll ax John," and, without more ado, he walked off to the back door of Mr. Longshanks' dwelling, and hollowed out as loud as he could bawl, "John, here be a man a horseback, axing for Miss Longmore."

"Tell him she's not here," shouted a voice from within, and the youth returning to the gate answered the chevalier's question by saying, "she bean't here, she bean't here ——."

Now, had he stopped there, he would have done perfectly right; but how few men are there in this world, or women either, who know where to stop, and the bumpkin with an exercise of the inductive faculties, which no one had a right to expect from him, added to the information he conveyed the words, "She be gone back again I fancy."

This was something more than hypothesis, it almost approached the dignity of a theory, for the youth had seen Miss Longmore the day preceding in that identical garden, and knew her to be Miss Longmore. He was now told that she was not there by good and competent authority. What conclusion could he arrive at but that she was gone? and, therefore, the only unsupported part of the whole assertion was conveyed in the words, "back again."

The chevalier instantly turned round his horse, and cantered away over the moor till he reached the village of Outrun, where he soon stood in the midst of his admiring friends.

"I insist upon the warrant being issued immediately," said Mr. Longmore, as soon as he had heard Mr. de Lunatico's statement. "Gentlemen, there must be no more delay. My child is a part of myself, the corpuscles of which she is composed are the same as those of which I am formed, and though she is detached from me physically, she is naturally as much mine as my arm, or my leg, or my foot, till I give her away to somebody else. I, therefore, claim my property unjustly withheld from me."

"Well, well, my dear sir, well, well," said Alderman Rotundity, "do not agitate yourself, the warrant shall be issued immediately, and we will go in a body to put it in execution till we can say too, 'fair Laura, eripe turpi colla jugo.'"

"Hang the man's Latin," said Mr. Puddenstream, "where's the clerk? Let's set about the business at once—it will be a famous thing to have a peer in the lock-up; but if we don't mind how we conduct this here business, we shall get into a mess. They're a devillish cunning set at Outrun Castle, and if they hear of our coming, will be off before we come."

"Let us be as quick as possible," said another magistrate, "and let no one whisper in the village what we are going to do."

"Do you hear, every body?" cried Mr. Rotundity—"quid de quoque viro, et cui dicas, saepe caveto."

"I'll get some stout fellows to go with us," said Harry Worrel. "Lord Outrun is more likely to fight than run."

"You are right there, my young friend," replied the chevalier; "the old gentleman showed not the slightest intention of employing the better part of his valour. The only person who is likely to run is a certain friend of mine called Jeremiah Tripe."

"Oh, the old scoundrel, I know him," cried every magistrate present—"one of the greatest rogues in Europe."

"Precisely," said the chevalier; "and as I have a little affair to

settle with him myself, I will beg leave to charge him before you, gentlemen, with the respectable and chivalrous crime of highway robbery. I am ready to swear to the charge, and beg you will issue your warrant accordingly."

The magistrates stared, but after having done so sufficiently, they each and all recollected that sundry persons had been stopped and robbed in the very sandy lane that ran under the wall of Outrun Park. The charge was then formally taken, the warrant issued, the constables collected, a few specials sworn in under apprehensions of a riot, and the whole party, headed by the parish beadle, set off for Outrun Castle. A number of little boys and girls followed to complete the procession, and several of them brought the edge of their thumbnail to the tip of their nose, and stretched out the little finger in rather an unseemly manner.

"The best way is over the stile," cried Harry Worrel; "we shall get there in half the time."

"No, no, let us go round by the regular gates," cried Mr. Puddenstream, "it's more dignified."

"Nonsense," cried another, "speed is what we want, not dignity."

"It's as far one way as another," said a fat old gentleman.

"*Castor sciat, un Docilis plus, Brundusium Numici melius via ducat, an Appi,*" said Mr. Rotundity.

"But who is to take the horses over?" said one more honest than the rest, touching at once upon what had been the sticking point with them all. "Mr. Deputy Popeseye here isn't fond of flying leaps I should think."

"Heaven forbid," said Mr. Deputy Popeseye, patting his fat stomach, "I should have the boys taking me for a balloon."

"I'll leap the horses, I'll leap the horses," said Harry Worrel; "the wall is a mere nothing to the right of the stile, and part of it broken down."

Some of the gentlemen, however, were accustomed to the hunting field, and when the infantry crossed the stile, two or three, amongst whom was Mr. Alderman Rotundity, leaped the park wall in great style, though it must be acknowledged that the alderman's hat fell off, and his chest emitted a grunt like that of an Irish paviour ramming home a mass of granite. Worrel took over the other horses—some at a standing, and some at a flying leap; and the chevalier excited the admiration of all by the graceful and high-flying manner in which he carried his horseflesh over the fence. The moment he had effected this feat, however, Mr. de Lunatico rode up to the side of Mr. Longmore, drew him a little apart from the rest of the company, and conversed with him for several minutes in a low but earnest tone. After some minutes' conference they called up Harry Worrel, but the very first words that were spoken to him had much the same effect as a spark into a pound of gunpowder. To use the expression of the antique gentlemen who wrote about a hundred years ago, the animal spirits flew in an instant from the heart to the surface, making him dig his spurs deep into his horse's side, which jumped some six feet high incontinent, and at the same time he exclaimed in a tone that carried his words

half over the park, "It's a lie!—It's a lie, chevalier," he added more calmly after a moment's consideration, "and if you'll show me this tall man you talk of, I'll break every one of his long bones for saying it."

Just at that instant one of the constables exclaimed, "There he goes! there he goes!"

"Who, who, who?" cried a dozen voices at once.

"Jerry Tripe," cried the constable running.

"Jerry Tripe," shouted a magistrate, trotting.

"Jerry Tripe," exclaimed Harry Worrel galloping.

"Tallyho," cried a squire waving his hat in the air; and off they all set like madmen, scouring over the park with as much speed as they severally could command.

It was a great and glorious sight to see. Jerry Tripe had a start of three hundred and fifty yards at least, the castle was at half a mile distant, the ground was broken, full of trees stunted hawthorns and little pools of water; there was a carriage road cut through a deep scarcely seen ravine between him and his pursuers; beyond that was a brook somewhat profound but not very broad, and about fifty yards from the house was a ha-ha, with a bridge and an iron gate upon it. Jerry knew every inch of the ground, every stock or stump, and path, and turn and bend; and after a moment's consideration of his belly and his legs, he determined he would give his pursuers a good run at all events, and off he set at the top of his speed. On rushed the hunt after him, the men on foot spreading out to intercept him whichever way he turned, the men on horseback pushing straight at the ravine, and Jerry taking every advantage of the ground, twisting, turning, and putting all sorts of obstacles between himself and the pursuers. Up like lightning they came to the top of the bank above the road, but here sad was the disarray that ensued. Deputy Popeseye's horse, seeing farther than his master, suddenly halted in full gallop, and started back, upon which the deputy, to show his indignation of such cowardice, flew over the animal's head, like a shell out of a mortar, fell with a squelch in his stomach on the road, and rolled about for several minutes like an overthrown ninepin. Mr. Rotundity, warned in time, rode round half a mile, the chevalier guided his horse slantingly down the bank, a number of squires and justices paused and looked over, the constables scrambled down and scrambled up, and Harry Worrel leaped his horse down, and then forced him up the other side, nearly breaking his neck in so doing. By this time, however, Jerry had recovered all that they had gained upon him from the first start, and still he was running on. Harry and he reached the bridge almost at the same moment, but Jerry banged the little iron gate in his pursuer's face, and thinking himself safe, lolled his tongue out of his mouth. The horse, however, almost as eager as his rider, cleared the gate at a standing leap, and the next instant Jerry's collar was grasped tight in Harry Worrel's powerful hand.

"Ah, this serves me right," said Jerry Tripe, "for you are the only man I ever really injured, Master Harry, but if you'll befriend me I'll make up for all."

... ..



May

CHAPTER LV.

THE FORTRESS SUMMONED—A FABLEY—A NEW WAY OF TEACHING MAGISTRATES
TO CONSIDER A QUESTION COOLLY—HARD CONDITIONS—THE SURPRISE.

No sooner was Jerry Tripe caught than the constables were upon him; one seized him and another seized him, and to see the strength with which they held him, one would have supposed that he was some new-caught Sampson, and they a swarm of pigmy Philistines. Jerry made no resistance in the least, however, but as the chevalier cantered up, the prisoner gave him a rueful look, saying, "I know who to thank for this."

"You have nobody to thank but yourself," replied the chevalier, and bending down his head, he added, "you know the conditions, it's not too late even now."

"I'll think about it," said Jerry Tripe, in the same low tone, "but you must come and speak with me."

"I will, I will," replied the chevalier, and the rest of the party riding up, this interesting conversation, of course, dropped.

"Now, my dear young friend," said Mr. de Lunatico turning to Harry Worrel, "I have particular reasons for wishing you to remain and keep guard with a constable over this worthy individual."

"Not I," cried Harry Worrel, "I am into the castle; till Laura is found I devote myself to one object alone."

"Harry Worrel, Harry Worrel," cried Mr. Longmore, over whose mind Mr. de Lunatico had established the most complete influence, "if you don't do as the chevalier tells you, you shall not have her at all. Mark my words, Harry, you know I'm a determined old gentleman, and, as Sir Walter Scott's Bohemian says, 'By the great Aldiboran I will keep my word.'"

Harry Worrel looked as one might suppose an eel going to be skinned would look if he knew what it was about, but still he dared not disobey, for till the ring was upon Laura's finger, he felt he should be standing upon very uncertain ground.

This matter being settled, the whole party marched forward in battle array along the terrace to the great door of Outrun Castle, having the cavalry in the centre, and the infantry in the wings. When they reached the doorway one of the constables advanced and rang the bell. Three footmen and a valet immediately presented themselves, and the storming party prepared for battle, when, to the surprise of all, the valet said in a mellifluous voice, "Pray, walk in, gentlemen, my lord expects you; he is very unwell, and has been obliged to retire to his room since breakfast, but he will receive you in his own apartment."

"Oh, very well, very well," said Mr. Puddenstream, willing to put himself forward on all occasions, "which is the way, which is the way?" and dismounting from his horse he took the lead of the party,

and was followed by Mr. Longmore and the rest of the magistrates, the constables remaining without.

Mr. Deputy Popeseye came next, not belonging to the county, and he was succeeded by the Chevalier de Lunatico who was present as a mere spectator.

"This way, gentlemen, this way," said the valet of Mr. Fitzurse, who, in the absence of Jerry Tripe, did the honours of the house, "please to follow me," and, with a jaunty step, he led the way through the great hall to the grand staircase.

Mr. de Lunatico remarked, as something rather curious, that the footmen who had been marshalled in the hall followed the rest of the party and brought up the rear. He asked himself what was the meaning thereof. Did the viscount really and truly propose to thrash the magistrates as he had threatened? But when he counted eight men besides himself, he judged that three footmen, a valet, and a noble lord would not be sufficient for the operation. He prepared himself, however, for all events, grasped his riding cane tightly by the middle, and kept a sharp eye upon every thing that took place.

Up the grand staircase, then, they mounted, three and three abreast, and along the corridor in the same order. Had any of those present been well acquainted with the locality, they would have perceived at once that they were not proceeding towards the viscount's ordinary bedchamber, for instead of stopping at the first floor, they ascended to the second, and it certainly did strike some of them as rather odd that the noble lord should domicile himself on an upper story, where neither the furniture nor decorations were at all equal to those below. Still, however, the valet walked forward along a wide corridor which led between two ranges of chambers towards a large pair of doors at the end, which he threw wide open. Immediately this was done, they perceived before them a small anteroom some twelve feet long by ten feet broad, beyond which was another pair of folding doors, likewise open, exhibiting the interior of another chamber, in which was beheld, exactly facing them, Viscount Outrun, Baron Fitzurse seated in a large armchair with his red night cap on his head. On either side of him stood his coachman and under coachman in state liveries. The peer himself seemed to the chevalier to be holding the end of a rope in his hand, and the same was the case with each of his attendant satellites.

"Now the parties are pretty equal," said the chevalier to himself, "and the tug of war seems approaching."

On tripped the valet through the anteroom with a somewhat accelerated step, saying, "The magistrates, my lord." On followed the worshipful gentlemen, three abreast, with the same stately step as before. The chevalier hung a little behind, not that he was frightened, dear reader, but that he was a prudent man anxious to see what would come next. He did see in a moment, for as soon as Mr. Puddenstream, Mr. Rotundity, and Mr. Longmore were two-thirds of the way across the anteroom, three other magistrates half way across it, Mr. Deputy Popeseye and another magistrate just within the doors, and the cheva-



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lier's own foot hanging over the threshold, up started the peer crying, "Haul away," and pulling at the rope in his hand with all his might.

Each of the coachmen did the same, there was the sound of bolts withdrawn, and in an instant the flooring, separating in the centre, fell down like two flaps of a table, precipitating the whole bench into a deep tank filled to the brim with water. Some fell upon their faces, some upon their backs, but all scrambled up on end in a minute, and there they stood, the tall ones up to their shoulders, the short ones up to their necks. The stiff pigtail of Mr. Longmore, softened by the liquid, rested languidly upon the surface, the wig of Mr. Puddenstream floated here and there, whirled round in the eddies caused by the immersion, and the rush of the waters with the panting of the eight hapless magistrates, and the laughter of the footmen and coachmen, raised such a hubbub that the chevalier could only hear the peer shouting, while he held his stomach with both his hands to prevent it from bursting with laughter. "There they are, by jingo, there they are. Did you ever see such fat fish in your life? It's enough to make a man live a hundred years to see them."

At the same moment, however, the chevalier whose caution had proved his safeguard, perceived one of the footmen approaching him with what he conceived to be an intention of treating him to the same sort of bath, and consequently he set his back against the wall, raised his riding cane, and said, "Keep off or I knock you down."

The footman did keep back, and the same moment the viscount's voice was heard exclaiming, "Silence! Every one be quiet. Now you shall see St. Anthony preaching to the fishes."

Thus saying, he advanced to the side of the tank, took off his red velvet night-cap, and bowed three times to the magistrates in the water below.

"My dearly beloved friends," he said, "hearing that you were coming upon an expedition which required coolness and discrimination, I have prepared for you a reception which will chill all the fiery and hasty particles of your blood, and restore you to that state of cold indifference which is becoming the judges and magistrates of a great nation —"

"D——n take me out of this place," cried Mr. Puddenstream.

"You shall repent of this, you shall repent of this," cried Mr. Longmore.

"*'Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto,'*" said Mr. Rotundity, looking round upon his companions.

"You blackguard! you villain! you impudent scoundrel!" cried several of the country magistrates.

"Be cool, be cool," replied the viscount, "you will all be cool in a little, and then you shall come out, but not before. The love of cold bathing, my friends, is inherent in the nature of man. It is only in consequence of the corrupt habit of wearing coats, waistcoats, and breeches, that we do not enjoy the water almost as much as we do the land. I am sure you will feel and appreciate the treat I have prepared for you, and remember the fire-tank of Outrun Castle till the last day of your lives. Do not let me in any degree put force upon your inclina-

tions, remain in as long as ever you please, and when you want to retire from your present situation, when you have enjoyed the delights of the bath sufficiently, you have nothing to do but to pronounce the following words:—"I solemnly promise Viscount Outrun, upon my honour, to walk straight out of his house the moment I am lifted out of this place, and not to come into it again till he asks me."

The unfortunate magistrates looked in each other's faces, and Mr. Puddenstream exclaimed, "'Pon my soul, this is too bad."

"My lord," said Mr. Longmore, "the hydrotastical process which you have had recourse to for the purpose of trying our resolution, will, I fear, prove too much for justice. Although not soluble in water, the body of man cannot bear immersion beyond a certain length of time, and as it is impossible for us, without the aid of instruments, to lift ourselves out of this tank or reservoir, I must request that you will direct your servants to assist me to some dryer place."

"The words, the words, the cabalistic words, most philosophical Longmore," cried the viscount. "By jingo, not one of you shall come out till you have pronounced those words, if you should all melt away together like lumps of sugar in a bowl of punch."

"Hang it, I'll say the words," cried Mr. Deputy Popeseys, "my stomach hasn't been so cold this forty years. Here goes then, I solemnly promise, Viscount Outrun, upon my honour, to walk straight out of his house the moment I am lifted out of this place, and not to come into it again till he asks me."

Once the example was given it spread like lightning.

"I solemnly promise——" said Mr. Rotundity.

"I solemnly promise——" shouted Mr. Puddenstream.

"I solemnly promise——" said Mr. Longmore.

One magistrate after another took up the tale, and went on solemnly promising in chorus as if they had been saying their prayers.

"Stop, stop, stop," cried the viscount, "one at a time, one at a time, we do every thing coolly in this house. Hand out that stout gentleman, John. Fat meat soonest cools the cook tells me," and two of the footmen advancing to the edge of the tank, stooped down benignly, and strove with might and main to lift the ponderous deputy out of his unpleasant resting-place. Just when they had got him to the brink, however, whether from malice or want of strength cannot be told, but back they let him fall into the water, and it was not till Mr. Puddenstream perceiving that his own escape must be delayed till that of the deputy was accomplished, put his shoulder under the fat nether man of the civic functionary, that the two stout footmen could sway him up to what might well be called the landing-place. Every one was now eager for the next turn, all dignity was forgotten, and piteous appeals were made every moment to the charity of the viscount. One vowed he had got the cramp, another said that he should die of the rheumatism, a third declared it would drive the gout to his stomach, but the viscount was inexorable.

"March off, fat man," he cried, "you'll be all the better for an airing in the sunshine; when you are gone, your fellows shall follow you." and then, one by one, he caused the others to be lifted out and

conducted down stairs by a footman, who never left them till they had passed the great doors.

Perhaps the worst of their misery, however, was to come, for there is no misery like ridicule, and so absurd was their appearance, as one after another they trooped out with their faces white, and their hair and garments dripping, that the boys tittered aloud, the constables grinned from ear to ear, and when, at length, Mr. Puddenstream appeared carrying his well-powdered, but now dropping wig in his hand, a loud and general shout of laughter burst forth and welcomed the adventurers back again, while at every window of Ostrun Castle appeared a head joining in the universal cachinnation.

"Well, Popeseye," said Mr. Rotundity, "I think you have had water enough for once."

"I can recollect once drinking it before," said Mr. Deputy Popeseye, "and I'll never take another glass as long as I live, it's very nasty stuff indeed."

"It's too bad, it's infamous," said Mr. Longmore. "Oh, if my grand self-acting-perpetuo-motival-electro-magnetic machine had not been burnt, I would knock the house down about his ears in five minutes."

"I'll—I'll—I'll punish him," said Mr. Puddenstream, taking his wig by the tail and shaking it vengefully towards Ostrun Castle.

"What's the matter, what's the matter?" cried Harry Worrel, leaving Jerry Tripe in the hands of the constable, and rushing up. "Have you discovered her?—Is she not there? What have you found?"

"Very nearly what the newspapers call a 'watery grave,'" replied Mr. Deputy Poyeseye. "Get along, get along, the sooner we are back to the Half Moon the better."

"But, where is Laura?" demanded Worrel, eagerly looking round upon the dripping magistrates.

"How the devil should we know?" said Mr. Puddenstream; "that there peer has ducked us, that's all, and we are going back as wise as we came."

"But I will not go back," said Harry Worrel, "I will force my way into the house with the constables and find her."

"Nonsense, nonsense, Harry," said Mr. Longmore; "they are too much for you, Harry."

"I shall catch my death of cold," said Mr. Deputy Popeseye.

"I have caught mine already," said Alderman Rotundity.

"Let us go back to the village, and swear in the whole people as special constables," said Mr. Puddenstream. "It's all owing to your not committing that fellow, Joey Pike, last night. People love reverence for the laws."

"I vote for sending for the yeomanry," said another magistrate.

"A capital thought," cried another.

"But are you going to leave the place in this way," exclaimed Harry Worrel, "baffled, insulted, and——?"

"Ducked," said Mr. Popeseye. "My dear young friend, there's no resource; there's not a man amongst us who would not sell his father,

much more his daughter, for a glass of milk punch and a dry flannel waistcoat."

"Listen to me, Worrel," said the chevalier. "You can do nothing at present. The indignation of these gentlemen is cooled, but not extinguished. As soon as *they* get dry, *it* will get warm again, a good dinner at the Half Moon will set it in a blaze. There must be, surely, some power in the country to vindicate the law, and as soon as you can collect force enough you can return to attack the castle, armed against resistance, and on your guard against all stratagems."

"Sir, you are an oracle," said Mr. Deputy Popeseye. "I wish some body would help me on my horse."

"What are we to do with this un that we have caught?"

"Take him to the black hole at Market Greenford," said Mr. Puddenstream.

"Is a committed?" asked the constable.

"There, don't bother," said Mr. Rotundity, who seemed soaked out of all his latinity. "Remanded for farther examination."

"That's it, that's it," cried all the magistrates. "Let us be off."

"Come, Harry, it is of no use now," said Mr. Longmore. "We'll think of how to get poor Laura out when we get to the inn."

"Would any of you, gentlemen, like a glass of cold water?" shouted one of the footmen from the window, and, sheepishly, but full of thoughts of high revenge, the whole party of magistrates mounted their horses and rode away followed by the constables with their prisoner.

CHAPTER LVI.

MADMOISELLE BROCHET IN PRISON—THE WAY INNOCENT PEOPLE MAY BE TREATED IN ENGLAND—JOEY'S DESPAIR—TRIP TO THE RESCUE.

SHORN of his beams, like the sun in a London fog, stripped of his glory, like Napoleon in St. Helena—where Sir Hudson Lowe called him "General" instead of Emperor, and where, if he had made any change in his title at all it would have been just as well to call him plain Mister Buonaparte, being fully as much justified in doing the one as the other by the important right and title of having no one to contradict him—unsexed, unbonnetted, uncurled, Mademoiselle Brochet sat in what was significantly called "The Black Hole" of the small town of Market Greenford.

Certain it is, dearly beloved reader, that the magistrates when they remanded him had not the slightest idea of the sort of punishment to which poor Joey Pike was about to be subjected. Certain it is, that when Mr. Longmore recommended the constable to deal kindly with poor Joey, he little thought how his recommendation would be followed.

The black hole was a black hole indeed, nearly as black as the heart which first invented such a place for shutting up our fellow-creatures in; and black indeed must that heart be, which can devise additional pangs to add to those which must fall upon a human being when, first charged with crime—a horrible infliction in itself—he is deprived of that blessed liberty, which is the great zest of life. But oh how dark and horrible must be the bosom of that man, who before he knows whether a fellow-creature be guilty or not, would do one tittle more than ensure against his escape, who would treat him with indignity, or mark him with the badge of crime. But to return to the black hole:—It was a small confined room with a stone floor, under the town-hall—for Market Greenford boasted of one of those places in which almost universally more nonsense is spoken and more iniquity committed than in any other hall in the kingdom, except, perhaps, the House of Commons. To get at the black hole you descended some three or four steps at the back of the aforesaid town-hall, for dear reader, you must know that it was sunk at least six feet below the ground, so that the prisoners were kindly permitted the advantage of any damp that was going, and in rainy weather that was not a little. To prepare the minds of those who were destined to tenant it for what was to ensue, the entrance was placed in a narrow, dark, back street, where ladies of not the most prudent character principally made their abode, and when the door was opened, the first thing that presented itself was a blank black void, into which the light penetrated unwillingly, and seemed very much surprised to find itself there. When the prisoner was once in,

however, and the door shut, for a moment all appeared darkness, but gradually he began to see a grey-looking spot upon the wall, perfectly round in form, and technically termed a "bull's eye."

Now, why a poor bull, who has a great deal of fire and expression in his eye, especially when he is in a passion, should be libelled by having every thing round and unmeaning compared to his organ of vision, one cannot well divine, but so it is ; and lest the reader in this instance should not exactly know what we mean by the term, let us explain that it is a thick, grey, half sphere of ground glass which gave the only light to the place where poor Joey Pike was confined.

Alack-and-a-well-a-day, what was his misery when he first entered into this abominable hole. It was night, as the reader well knows, and the constable accompanied him in with a lantern in his hand. Joey looked round him in dismay. The furniture was not very abundant, there was an iron bedstead fixed to the wall—a quantity of straw piled upon it, apparently not very clean—a woollen rug, not so good as a piece of old Kidderminster carpet, cast over the foot of the bedstead—The catalogue is done, reader, that was all. There once, indeed, had been some wooden chairs, but a worthy magistrate, a fit follower of the philanthropic Howard, had caused them to be removed for fear the prisoners should break each other's heads with them. The bedstead they could not use for such a purpose, for it was stanchioned down, and so he let that remain. Joey Pike seized the constable's hand, and pressed it tenderly, "you will not have the *crudelty*," he said, "to leave me here alone. Surely, surely, you will never have the barbarity"—

"Stuff and nonsense," cried the constable, "I can't stay with thee all night, lad. There are no ghosts in this place."

"Ah," cried Joey, "ghosts have undone me, but leave me not in darkness. *Donnez moi une chandelle !*"

"I can't give you a shandle as you call it, you fool," replied the tender-hearted officer. "It's against the rules, Joey. There, go to bed and go to sleep. To-morrow you'll be had up for examination again. It's only a matter of twelve hours, so don't be a fool," and away he went, leaving our unhappy friend Joey Pike in utter darkness and profound despair.

His feelings instantly overcame him, injured, ill-treated, frustrated of his noblest designs, all his grand views and splendid conceptions blown to the winds, and he himself left desolate on the floor of the black hole, Joey instantly conceived himself "The Martyr of Antioch," or some other such personage, and overpowered with the horrors of his situation he sat down and fell into a violent fit of hysterics. He wept, he laughed, he sobbed, he gulped, he snapped his fingers, he shouted, "*Ah, ah, sorey*," but, in the end, exhausted nature sought the arms of sleep, and day had dawned ere Joey woke again.

For nearly five minutes after his eyes unclosed Joey remembered not where he was, and he was utterly confounded and surprised to see the great bull's eye staring at him from the wall. At first he took it for the moon in a foggy night, and from his sensations fancied that he had gone asleep under a hedge. Next he took it for a globe lamp just

going out, and thought that he must have been waiting at some dinner party, drank too much wine, and taken a nap on the floor of the dining-room. The feel of the rug convinced him that he was upon a carpet, but he could not tell what to make of the straw. Gradually, however, sad remembrance came back, and about half an hour after the constable did so too, bringing with him an earthen pot swinging by a string tied round the top and an iron spoon.

"They toald me to be kind to thee, Joey," said the constable, "so I've brought thee some gruel, mun."

"If they had not told him he would have brought nothing," thought Joey, "and I should have been left to starve in this dungeon *le Barbare!* I will take a higher tone with the monster—Mr. Constable," he continued, "I do not approve of your conduct, it is too bad—*È tropo forte.* I must beg to have coffee, I am not accustomed to eat water-gruel except when I am *enrhoomy.* I insist upon having coffee, sir; I will not eat water-gruel.

"You may eatun or lettun alone," replied the constable, with perfect nonchalance.

"I insist too upon having paper, pens and ink," continued Joey, "I want to make notes of my defence. I intend to apply for a *habeas corpus.*"

"Have his *corpus!*" cried the constable; "I suppose you mean old Scapulary's—Well, that is a go! But you can't have it, young man, if you apply ever so much, for he's been buried this week, and is as rotten as a medlar by this time. Dang it, but I'll tell the magistrates that. Arter having strangled the old man he wants to have his *corpus,* on my life. That's what you call killing your own mutton, Joey, I suppose: be it not?"

"*Quel mensonge,*" cried Joey Pike. "Will you give me the paper and the pens?"

"Noa, to be sure," replied the constable. "If thou hadst 'em what couldst thou do with 'em?"

"Write! scrieben! écrire! scrivere! escribir! Write, I say, write!" shouted Joey Pike.

"What, in the dark, Measter Joey? Well, you are a crackbrain! There, eat your gruel, and doan't make a fool of yourself," and thus saying, he turned away and once more left Joey Pike to his solitary meditations.

Sad and solemn were his thoughts, dark and gloomy his anticipations. In the course of his contemplations he exhausted almost every known language to find fresh words to bemoan his fate, but time flew by without bringing relief, and an unpleasant clock situated in front of the Town-hall, not only told him each hour that passed, but every quarter also, which was a sad strain upon poor Joey's nerves. After disdainng the gruel till eleven o'clock had struck, he determined to be magnanimous and eat it, and when he had done he wished he had had some more. At all events, it was an occupation of his time, and that was something, but it was in vain he wished, no more gruel came, and two o'clock had struck before the slightest variation took place in

the dull blank of his existence. Then, however, a loud shout was heard, the voices of numerous urchins under ten years old, whose little spirits seemed to be in a great state of excitement. The shout assumed the peculiar tone of what is called a hoot, and Joey starting from the bed on which he sat, cast himself into an intensely tragic attitude, bending forward his head and stretching forth his two hands towards the door with a look of keen horror and apprehension.

"They come," he cried, "they come. They are preparing to lead me to judgment or to death—oh infelicechy!" and smiting his right hand hard upon his breast, he suddenly whirled it back again towards the sky with the first and second finger extended upwards, in which direction his eyes were also turned. It is a great pity, indeed that there was no eye to look upon him but the bull's eye. The moment after the door opened, the light rushed in, and Joey beheld a multitude of faces crowded around the steps, while between two constables, looking somewhat rueful, but yet with a comic grin upon his countenance, appeared Jeremiah Tripe, the renowned butler of Viscount Outrun.

"Oh ciel!" cried Joey, "*e il Signor Tripe!*"

"I say, Tom," said Jerry, speaking to one of the constables, "come in, there's a good fellow. Shut the door and keep the boys out. Get us a pint of gin and a little hot water, will ye? There's half-a-crown for ye, keep the bob for yourself."

It instantly became evident to Joey Pike, that his companion in adversity, being an older bird than himself, and probably having been caught before, understood trap better than he did.

"That I will, Measter Tripe," replied the constable. "Any thing to make you comfortable."

"Get me the same," cried Joey, rushing forward and presenting his half-crown. Mr. Tripe, we'll hob-nob. *Nous tranquerons.*"

"Ah, Joey, my lad, is that you?" said the respectable butler.

"Well, it's pleasant to be in good company. We'll keep ourselves merry, Joey. What brought you here?"

"A constable, and a false accusation," replied Joey Pike. "May I put the same question to you, Mr. Tripe?"

"Two constables and a true one," replied Jerry, with his usual frankness. "It's a long time since you and I met, Joey."

"Not so long as you think," answered Joey Pike. "In me you behold Mademoiselle Brochet!"

And Joey cast himself into an attitude of tender confusion.

"The devil I do!" exclaimed the butler. "Well, upon my life, I never thought you were a lad of such spirit. You did me, Joey, you did me, and a man must be up early in the morning to do me!"

"I should think he must," answered Joey Pike, "but I was up early in the morning, Mr. Tripe, for I never went to bed all night."

"Hey? What? How?" said Jerry; "I scarcely think I'm up to you yet."

"No, you are not," replied Joey, "but, perhaps Mr. Tripe, we may mutually do each other a little good. Do you recollect a certain letter that you wrote to the widow of old Scapulary?"

"Ay, to be sure I do," answered Jerry Tripe, his voice falling, "the ghost got that."

"*Pardonnez moi*," replied Joey, "I got it, for I accompanied the ghost."

"The deuce you did!" exclaimed the butler. "Come, give it me back again, there's a good boy. It can be nothing to you, and my lord would be very angry if he knew"——

"That I am aware of the truth?" said Joey. "But I say that it is every thing to me, Mr. Tripe, and even if I wished it I could not give the letter back, it is in the hands of my beloved master, the Chevalier de Lunatico, and he will see justice done."

"Whew!" whistled Jerry Tripe. "Then the whole business is blown, and there can be no harm in my telling the truth, and so slipping my own neck out of a halter."

"None in the world," answered Joey, "none in the world, Signor Tripo, and I exhort you very much to tell *la vérité*. Depend upon it I will reward you for it when I am placed in the situation to which my birth entitles me."

Jerry paused for a moment without reply, and then inquired in a mellifluous tone, "Why, Master Joey, whom do you take yourself to be?"

"The son of Lord Outrun's sister by a private marriage," replied Joey Pike.

"Here's a go!" exclaimed Mr. Tripe, and the constable brought in the gin.

CHAPTER LVII.

4 NUMBER OF OLD GENTLEMEN BROUGHT TO BED—THE CHEVALIER MAKES
MRS. MUGGINS CONFESS SHE HAS A SECRET—AN ESSAY UPON THE VIRTUES
OF FANCY FOOTMEN RESUMED.

EVERY bed in the Half-Moon was occupied; there was not a hole that had not a magistrate in it. Never had so many pairs of sheets been aired—never was the warming pan so frequently filled with fresh coals—never was such a quantity of punch brewed, except on a club night, as was the case at the Half-moon, after the return of the storming party from Outrun Castle. Mrs. Muggins was as busy as a certain dusky potentate is reputed to be in a gale of wind, and on coming down stairs at length, she held her portly sides, drew a deep breath, and then burst into a slight titter, declaring she had never tucked up so many old gentlemen in her life before. She did not perceive as she spoke, that the Chevalier de Lunatico was standing close beside the bar; but as soon as she did perceive it she dropped a low courtesy, saying,

“La ! sir, I beg your pardon, I did not know you were there. One will say foolish things, you know; and it is a funny sight to see them all in bed with the clothes under their chin.”

“I dare say it is, Mrs. Muggins,” replied the chevalier; “and as I think you an excellent woman, and one calculated to give good advice, I should like a few words’ conversation with you in private.”

“Certainly, sir, certainly,” replied Mrs. Muggins, “we will step into the back parlour directly. Jane, see all those things put to the fire. What are you puddling about there? There are eight pair of breeches as wet as water, and all the coats and waistcoats. It’s lucky poor dear Muggins left such a stock of shirts, and was such a stout man, for his linen fits all sizes; but as for the coats and them there things, they must be dried. Although his best black coat might suit the alderman tolerably, Mr. Longmore in the blue one would look like a glass of gin in a quart pot. Now, sir, I’m quite ready.”

“Why, my dear madam,” said the chevalier, “I will just go and see after my young friend, and bring him with me to converse with you. Lovers are like tame bears, Mrs. Muggins, if one does not keep a chain upon them they are apt to do mischief one way or another.”

“So they are, sir,” said Mrs. Muggins, from the bottom of her heart: “hadn’t you better take a glass of wine and a biscuit, sir?”

"I think I had," replied the chevalier, "if you will partake thereof. Let us have a bottle of your best sherry. I will be back with you directly;" and going back to the bed-chamber in which Mr. Longmore had taken up his temporary dwelling between the sheets, he found Harry Worrel detained somewhat impatiently by the good old gentleman who was reading him a lecture upon patience, in which optics and ethics, Christianity and hydraulics, were mingled in a wonderful and not very pellucid manner. By the chevalier's tact and discernment, however, the lecture was cut short, and an arrangement was made with the other magistrates, by which it was agreed that they should all assemble again in the principal room at the Half-Moon in three hours from that time, which would bring it to five o'clock; farther measures were then to be determined upon for the recovery of Laura and the punishment of the abductors. This being settled, Worrel retired with the chevalier who led him to the parlour of Mrs. Muggins, saying to the ostler, who was leaning against the door-post with a straw between his teeth—

"If you have two fresh horses that we can ride, I wish you would saddle them, and bring them out in a quarter of an hour."

"In a minute, sir, in a minute," replied the man.

"No not in a minute," said the chevalier; "in a quarter of an hour—" and entering the room where the wine was prepared he sat down, poured out a glass for Mrs. Muggins, another for himself, and a third for Harry Worrel.

"Here's your health, Mrs. Muggins," said the chevalier, in a calm easy way, as if he had made up his mind to make himself comfortable for the next three or four hours. But let it be remarked by the reader that the Chevalier de Lunatico never did any thing inconsiderately.

"Your health, sir," said Mrs. Muggins, "your health, Master Harry. Lord, Mr. Worrel, don't look so sad, you'll get Miss Laura sooner or later, never fear."

Harry Worrel nodded to the good landlady, replying, "Thank you, Mrs. Muggins. Nevertheless, I can't help being uneasy in the meantime."

"Why, that's very true," said the hostess, "you always were an impatient boy. Do you recollect when you used to live in this village, in your young days? Poor Muggins used to say you was so eager that all through life you would eat the apples before they were ripe."

"I am afraid of somebody robbing my orchard, if I leave them too long," replied Harry Worrel. "Ay, I recollect those times very well, Mrs. Muggins," and he suffered his mind to rest for a moment or two upon the past.

As poor Keates once beautifully said—

"The spirit calls
Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays
Through the old garden ground of boyish days."

But, alas! in the turmoil and struggle of active existence we have too little time to go gathering on the paths of memory.

"I think you told me once, Mrs. Muggins," continued Harry Worrel, "that you knew my father, and mother, and my uncle."

"Yes, that I did, Master Harry," replied Mrs. Muggins, "I did know your father, and mother, and your uncle."

The chevalier remarked a particular tone in Mrs. Muggins' speech, which did not surprise him, but excited his inquiring faculties. I won't call it his curiosity, for that is a different thing. "Ay, Mrs. Muggins," he said, "I dare say you know more of them than any body else, and could tell us the whole story if you liked."

"Lord, sir," said Mrs. Muggins opening her eyes, "what makes you suppose there is any story to tell?"

"Because I am sure of it, Mrs. Muggins," replied the chevalier, "and I rather suspect that ere long you will be obliged to tell it."

"Oh, if I am obliged, sir," said Mrs. Muggins, "that is another affair. I don't know any thing, I only guess, and no one has a right to speak upon guess work. I have been a prudent woman all my days, sir, and never told my husband's secrets, and he was a freemason, or any body else's, for that matter; so I'll hold my tongue, if you please, till I am obliged to tell."

"At present, perhaps, it will be better," said the chevalier, "but ere long we will talk more upon the subject."

"Why not at present, my dear chevalier?" said Harry Worrel, whose curiosity was now excited, as may be well supposed. "I am sure my dear Mrs. Muggins will tell me any thing that may be for my good."

"Ay, you're a coaxing lad," replied Mrs. Muggins, with a laugh, "but it won't do, Master Harry. I'm not going to say any thing I can't prove, and might be punished for —, and besides, I don't know that it would be for your good. You are very well off as you are, and might be worse; so I shall hold my tongue."

"Let her alone for the present, Worrel," said the chevalier, "the time is coming when she will say more; and now, Mrs. Muggins, pray tell me, if that is not a secret too, where is it people get marriage licences in this neighbourhood?"

"Lawk a mercy, sir, are you going to be married?" said Mrs. Muggins: "well I wouldn't, if I were you, at your time of life, and if I did I'd be married by banns."

"I'll consider of it," said the Chevalier; and Mrs. Muggins proceeded: "But, however if you do wish to know, sir, the only person who sells licences is Dr. Hookham, at Swillington, he's what they call the Surrygate. You can't miss your way, you've nothing to do but to ride down the lane where you've been more than once before, I think, and when you've passed the park wall turn to the left—but you know it quite well, Master Harry, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, I know it quite well," replied Harry Worrel, his face brightening up at the idea of marriage licences, for he had a strong

eneration for the chevalier, and a quick imagination which prompted the idea that Mr. de Lunatico knew more of Laura Longmore than he chose to mention, and was about to apply for a licence, in which he and she might both be interested.

Oh, what a curious thing the imagination of youth is! The genii who built Aladdin's palace in a night never from all their sparkling stones raised an edifice so splendid as young imagination will build up in a single minute out of empty air.

"The hosses is ready, sir," said the ostler putting in his head.

"Come along, Harry," said the chevalier, "I have two or three places to go to while these good gentlemen get comfortably warm," and taking leave of Mrs. Muggins, he proceeded to the horses' backs, upon which they were speedily carried along for about three miles, the chevalier informing Worrel as he went, that his object was, to ascertain when Mr. Fitzurse was really going to be married, thus knocking down poor Harry's air-built castle in a moment. However as action was what the young gentleman principally desired in the state of suspense which he was forced to endure, he was well satisfied to be the chevalier's companion, and the pair rode along at as quick a pace as the hacks of the inn would go, till they reached a certain lime-kiln cut in the chalky bank, as they approached, which Harry Worrel's nag shyed violently with an evident determination not to pass.

"On my life it's a man's head!" cried Harry Worrel, forcing up his horse to the door-way, "Who are you, my good fellow?—Oh! I recollect you."

"Get away, Harry Worrel, get away," cried the man from within, "it is not you I want. Get away, and leave me alone, and mind you tell nobody that you've seen me, or they'll put me in prison again, and swear that I am mad."

"Ah, poor fellow, I am sorry for you," said Harry Worrel, riding on, "that's poor Trollop, the postman, whose daughter was seduced by that young scoundrel, Fitzurse," he continued, addressing the chevalier, "you recollect meeting with her in London."

"To be sure," replied Mr. de Lunatico, "I must find him out, and give him a ticket as we are coming back; there can be no doubt of his being one of us. But here I fancy is the place."

"Yes, that is Swillington church," answered Harry Worrel, "Hookham's rectory. He holds this parish and Ountrun too, worth sixteen hundred pounds a-year together."

"Pray, how many parishioners has he?" asked the chevalier.

"About four thousand in all," replied Harry Worrel, "but he keeps a curate to do the duty of the parish."

"And what does he give him?" said the chevalier.

"A hundred a year, I fancy," replied Worrel quietly.

"That is a bad system," said the chevalier, "for of course the curate must be a poor ignorant creature who will not do his important duties as they ought to be done."

"I beg your pardon," cried Worrel, almost indignantly, "he is one

of the most amiable, excellent, well-informed young men that I know. He works from morning till night, visiting the sick, consoling the poor, supporting the well-disposed, and exhorting the vicious. If it were not for him both parishes would be utterly neglected, for this Hookham is a cunning, mercenary, hard-living sot."

"And has sixteen hundred pounds a-year for doing nothing," said the chevalier, "while the good priest has one? May I ask who are the people at the head of your church?"

"Oh the bishops and archbishops," replied Harry Worrel.

"Ah!" said the chevalier, "if they don't make some new arrangement I shall have the whole bench up stairs presently."

"The fact is," replied Worrel, "that Hookham married a lady of rank and fortune—with a somewhat damaged reputation, it is true, but still she has influence, and that is the secret of his having so much preferment. Her brother gave him Swillington, and the viscount gave him Outrun, after a drinking bout one night."

The chevalier mused, and in a few minutes they came up to those gates from which Laura Longmore had been repulsed so unceremoniously.

"Is Dr. Hookham at home?" said the chevalier, when the long footman appeared.

The lackey eyed him from head to foot, and looked at his horse before he answered. But, as we have before shown, there was a tone of authority about the chevalier which was not easy to be resisted, and the good gentleman in a somewhat supercilious manner, answered that he believed he was.

"Call a groom then to take the horses," said Mr. de Lunatico, and the effect upon the lackey's mind was complete, for it is extraordinary how soon quiet self-possession overpowers vulgar insolence.

The groom was called, and the chevalier and Harry Worrel were shown into a room in which sat the doctor and Lady Amelia Hookham. The former was a tall, stout, well-formed man of fifty, with a fat heavy face, small eyes, and a very blue beard. Drunkenness produces various effects upon different complexions—in some instances it produces redness, in some paleness, and his was the white sort. He had a peculiar expression about the mouth too, which frequently follows habitual inebriety, giving the idea of constant sickness of stomach, so that to judge by his face the doctor appeared to be under the continual influence of ipecacuanha.

When the name of the Chevalier de Lunatico was announced, and it was the only one given, the worthy doctor looked over the newspaper which he was reading, and then slowly rose upon his end. His lady, however, who was a faded beauty in second matrimony, turned suddenly round with her face fluttering with blonde and suppositious hair, exclaiming with a sweet simper, "Ah, chevalier, I am delighted to see you. This is really kind of you! My friend Lord Abissee wrote me word he had met you in London. He says you are a very remarkable person."

"I am, madam," replied the chevalier coolly. "I trust I have the pleasure of seeing your ladyship quite well."

"Tolerably," said Lady Amelia, in a somewhat discontented tone—"moped to death of course, in this dull place, with nobody but Hookham to entertain one, and he, poor man, you know, has neither wit nor conversation."

"As to wit," said Dr. Hookham benignly, "if I had any it would be a pity to waste it on your ladyship, and as to conversation, whatever there is in the family, you take care to have it all to yourself."

"A happy pair," thought the chevalier. It's good that some of the comforts of matrimony should be placed before the eyes of those who come seeking marriage licences.

"I wish, Lady Amelia," continued the doctor, "you would make that footman somewhat more regular in his habits, here it is near three o'clock, and the luncheon is not laid yet."

"You are always abusing the footman, doctor," said Lady Amelia Hookham, "and I'm sure he is one of the best servants you ever had. Why, he stands six foot three; and such a calf to his leg—I never take a footman under six foot, chevalier, and I have been very lucky this time."

"I think so, indeed, madam," replied the chevalier, "I have always understood that, in this country, the moral qualities of the domestics are in the exact ratio of their inches."

"The inverse ratio you mean, sir," grumbled Dr. Hookham, "the taller the greater thieves."

"Pray, does your ladyship take the same view of the subject?" said the chevalier, exerting his full powers upon her.

"I care nothing about that," replied the lady, "I like to have good-looking men about me, none of your little, mean-looking footmen. No coachman enters my service under sixteen stone; and no footman under six foot. If they are thieves I can't help it, but I won't have my coach-box, or the back of my chair disgraced by a pigmy, if he were as virtuous as an angel." The chevalier put his hand in his breeches-pocket and drew out a ticket, but he kept it in the palm of his hand till such time as he had settled the matter with Dr. Hookham.

"Your ladyship is perfectly right," he said. "We judge exactly in the same way in my country, as I hope to show your ladyship some day; but my business at present is with the reverend doctor. I wish to know if he can tell me where any very respectable surrogate lives, of whom a man of rank and consequence would like to get a marriage licence."

"I am your man," said Dr. Hookham, his whole face becoming animated, "and I shall be very happy to perform the ceremony also. It's only this morning that I gave a licence to the Honourable Frederick Augustus Henry Fitzurse, and I am to meet him to-morrow morning at Outrun church to tack him and the lady together. The fee is to be five guineas, but mind, it's quite a secret, you must not mention it to any one."

"It is precisely the secret I wanted to know," said the chevalier, rising; and, placing the billet in the lady's hands, he added, "Permit me to offer your ladyship my address, and trusting to see you again soon, allow me to wish you a good morning."

Thus saying, he nodded familiarly to Dr. Hookham, and, accompanied by Harry Worrel, quitted the room abruptly. The lady started and screamed, and threw the ticket down on the table; but Dr. Hookham took it up, and when he had read it he laughed aloud—calling the chevalier one of the best fellows he had ever seen.

CHAPTER LVIII.

JOEY PIKE RECOVERS SPIRITS—HIS OWN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF—TRIFE ON MAGISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS—AN ESSAY ON SUSPENDED ANIMATION.

It is wonderful how the spirits of Joey Pike rose as the gin got into him. Every man can make a spirit barometer point to fair weather if he will but fill it full enough. It may damage the instrument a little, it is true, but still the receipt is an infallible one; and man, who is, after all, but a measure of the *baros* that is upon him, bears it up decidedly more lightly upon a full stomach than an empty one. Things began to look very bright in the eyes of Joey Pike. The warm water was not without its effect, and the companionship of the jovial butler was an immense support. Instead of being the Martyr of Antioch in his own eyes, Joey resumed the hero again, and transformed himself, in his own imagination, from Mademoiselle Brochet into Latour d'Auvergne, premier grenadier de la France. He was indulging in this sweet grandeur when the voice of Mr. Tripe roused him with a fat and rotund cachinnation.

"Ha, ha, ha, Joey!" cried the butler of Outrun Castle; "so you are a great man after all. Now, sit down quietly, and tell me all about it, and how you came to know it."

"I will," replied Joey, seating himself upon the edge of the bed, from which he had risen as his spirits rose the moment before, and by which he had been standing much in the attitude of one of Fuseli's fallen angels—that is to say, very much a-straddle. "I will, Monsieur Tripe. Ecco! The sister of Viscount Outrun was privately married. Can you deny that?"

"Oh! I deny nothing," replied Jerry Tripe, who would have passed the most ridiculous proposition that ever was propounded with the same facility which a British house of commons displayed in passing Rowland Hill's bill for diminishing the revenue, ruining the post-office, over-working the clerks, breaking down the mail-coaches, and tormenting unfortunate gentlemen with letters from every ass who chooses to write to them about nothing at all. "Oh! I deny nothing. But what then?"

"From this *matrimonio segreto*," continued Joey, "sprang a son. Can you deny that, Jerry Tripe?"

"Oh! I deny nothing," replied Jerry Tripe, once more. "What became of the young gentleman?"

"Eccolo!" cried Joey at the top of his voice, striking his breast at the same time.

"Ha, ha, ha," shouted Jerry Tripe; "ha, ha, ha, ha! so you've
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found it out at last, Joey. Well, 'pon my life, it makes a good story. I dare say it's true? Why, you were brought up at Outrun Castle too. Many a time I have kicked your young lordship round the kitchen when you've made faces at my nose. Ha, ha, ha! 'pon my life, we'll adopt it."

Just as he was in one of these fits of laughter which not a little disconcerted poor Joey Pike, the door of the Black Hole opened, and the worthy constable put in his head, exclaiming—

"A gentleman wants to speak wi' ye, Measter Tripe. There's two on 'em."

"Show them in, show them in," cried Jerry Tripe, waving his hand: "we will receive them were they ten instead of two. Ah, my revered friend the chevalier, and Mr. Worrel, too; but, chevalier, if you would have any private conference with me it must be alone. Two is company, three is none, chevalier. Never give meat to a cat with three ears. Two men may part a small mess between them, but a third will leave nothing for either."

"I only wish to inquire," said the chevalier, "if you are disposed to answer the question I put to you this morning?"

"Most profoundly," replied Jerry Tripe. "My doctors advise change of air; they consider this residence too low for me; they would not recommend exactly too elevated a situation, such as that where the hemp tree grows, yet they consider that the sooner I alter my residence the better, and I perfectly agree with them. You see, chevalier," he continued, holding up the little pewter mug of spirits, and turning it on one side so as to evince that it was not quite so full as it once had been—"you see, I have a tendency towards consumption, and am just now subject to a lowness of spirits. Therefore whatever be your recipe I will take it, and trust you will acknowledge that I am a tractable patient."

"I think I understand you," said the chevalier; "and never doubted that you would listen to reason. But how is the matter to be managed now, and how am I to get you out of this place, which is certainly a very disagreeable one? You are, of course, condemned already—summary justice in your country, it seems."

"Condemned!" cried Jerry Tripe. "Why, I am only just nabbed—oh, no, thank God, I have three months to come and go upon yet."

"What!" exclaimed the chevalier: "so people put a man into such a hole as this without his being condemned? That is impossible!"

"So probably the law thought," replied Jerry Tripe, "when it put power in the hands of local magistrates. But I'll tell you how we manage matters in England, my dear chevalier. It's a complicated system, and worth your attention. We've a thing called a government, consisting of some thirteen or fourteen persons, each having a considerable number of friends and relations, all of whom want as much money as they can get. The government itself is chosen by a somewhat round-about process out of two parties who are always fighting about nothing, and who meet once a-year in the Chapel of St. Stephen—"

"He was the first martyr, I think," said the chevalier.

"Yes," said Jerry, "and must still suffer martyrdom every night if he's any thing to do with his chapel; for there, as I said, these two parties meet, and play at what the boys call 'pull devil, pull baker.' Whichever's the strongest—and they have two grand means of recruiting their party, bribery and palaver—chooses the ministers, and they, calling themselves the government, appoint what are called the lords lieutenants of counties, taking of course the men who have bribed most or palavered most on their behalf. Then the lords lieutenants look about the county for men who have plenty of money in their purses, and who pretty generally belong to their own party, and these they get appointed as magistrates."

"Of course they are thoroughly acquainted with the law?" said the chevalier.

"Oh! dear, no," replied Jerry Tripe; "they know nothing of the law at all. As soon as they are appointed they buy a book called 'Burn's Justice,' and if they can square their conduct by that they are very well contented. But in the hands of these men are placed the rule and governance of all the prisons, and the treatment of the prisoners. They can do just what they like with a poor man, knowing very well that there is no chance of their being punished for any thing they do unless somebody with money takes the matter up, and then most likely they will be supported by those in authority."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said the chevalier; "this must be calumny. I can't help thinking, my good friend, that you must have been really tried and convicted, otherwise you would never be here, crammed into a hole, a day's sojourn in which must be almost as bad as hanging."

"I can't tell," replied Jerry; "I never was hanged; but what I say is true nevertheless. Ask Joey Pike, there."

"Ah! my poor Joey, is that you?" cried the chevalier: "if they have put you in here, my poor Joey, what he says must be true."

"*C'est trop vrai,*" cried Joey, emphatically. "Oh, *cattivo soggiorno.*"

"It isn't fit for a cat or a dog either," cried Jerry Tripe. "We are a funny people, chevalier, as you'll find out when you've known us long enough. The most honest man in the world may be taken up and crammed in here, and remanded day after day if he do not know where to get bail; maybe deprived of light, air, and exercise, his health destroyed, his business utterly ruined for want of his presence, he himself made a bankrupt, and his family brought to starvation by any rascal who chooses to swear a crime against him and take his chance of the consequences. A man may be going to London with money to pay a debt due on a particular day; he stops at an inn and meets with some scoundrel whom he has punished in former days; the scoundrel gives him in charge to a constable, and swears a crime against him; the constable takes him before a magistrate, the magistrate remands him for further examination, the debt's unpaid, the bill protested, a docket struck, the man a bankrupt, and then the law says there is no wrong

without a remedy; but a few months' hard labour on the part of a false accuser does not seem to me to be any remedy at all for such evils as the honest man has suffered."

"Why, Jerry," said Harry Werral, "you seem to have got wonderfully moralizing and philosophical since you got into prison."

"I always was, sir," replied Jerry Tripe; "I am the only man in England who has always acted upon principle. I always considered the end and object of all things. The chevalier knows we've discoursed upon such subjects before."

"Yes, Jerry," said Mr. de Lunatico, "but did you ever consider your own end?"

"Oh yes, sir," replied Jerry Tripe. "I've made up my mind to its being what it's likely to be; but in this country it is well worth while to commit great crimes—every thing on earth is done to encourage murder. I wonder that the art has not prospered more than it has; for when the greater punishments are awarded for minor crimes why should a man stop at being wicked by halves? I'll tell you how it is, chevalier. We've a very odd way of proceeding, we are a humane people and very charitable, we build hospitals and take care of broken legs and arms. We provide gruel for lying-in women, and pretend to think immensely of human suffering and infirmity. But then, if a man have taken four or five bits of yellow metal on the king's highway, or written another man's name by mistake instead of his own, we calmly and deliberately keep him in prison for a great many months, torture his mind and confine his body, and at last take him out between a parson and a butcher, with his arms tied behind his back, with his heart sinking, and his knees shaking. Then they put a rope round his neck, and while the parson is talking to him to take off his attention, like a conjurer's clown, the butcher pulls out a bolt, away goes the floor on which the poor devil stands, he gives a great gulp, draws his knees up to his chin, swings about for a minute with a quiver and a struggle, and then all the thousands of people who have been looking on go away very well satisfied. After which the newspapers tell us all about it, and say, 'he was launched into eternity!' A very pretty launch indeed—more like a shipwreck I should think."

"And from this shipwreck you are determined to save yourself, I hope," said the chevalier, returning to his point.

"Oh, certainly," replied Jerry. "I never was fond of a marine life, and always hated wood and cordage. But here's our good friend Joey here can tell you all about what you want to know as well as I can. Tell the chevalier, Joey, tell him. He was giving me a full, true, and particular account this very minute."

"*C'est fait,*" cried Joey: "I have told him already."

"What! and he wouldn't believe you?" said Jerry Tripe. "Well, chevalier, one thing I will say even now. Joey has not deceived you; part of what he says is true, and the rest he believes. If you get me out of this scrape I will tell you the rest, but still you will have a good deal to do for yourself before you can set the matter right."

"But can I trust you for giving me all the information you possess?"

replied the chevalier. "If I decline to prosecute, you may draw back and refuse to tell."

"Sir," cried Jerry Tripe, rising up and laying his hand upon his stomach, thinking probably that his heart was there, "I give you my word of honour, and you must have seen that I am a man of honour. Did I not resolutely go to prison, and was I not prepared to meet death itself rather than violate my word? And even now I would not tell you any thing had not Joey here got hold of a letter by which sooner or later the whole secret must come out. Sir, I promise you upon my honour I will communicate all I know if you decline to prosecute."

"I think you may trust him, my dear sir," said Harry Worrel, good humouredly.

"Oh yes," cried Joey Pike, enthusiastically. "*C'est un homme d'honneur*. You can confide in Signor Tripo. What, though his belly be his god, and his nose a carbuncle, yet the light of honour shines in his *occhi*, and he will not deceive you."

"Very well," said the chevalier, "I will trust him, but this communication must be made as soon as he is at liberty. Come, Harry Worrel, it is time that we should return, for the magistrates must be now rising again, and there is much to do."

"Pause, pause, chevalier," said Joey Pike, "and let me not be incarcerated here till I thaw and dissolve into a dew. Bear a message from me to the magistrates—it is but two words. If they will hear me I will tell them who is the murderer of the deceased Scapulary. Bid them but listen and attend to justice, and I will prove my own innocence and another's guilt. Tell them, oh tell them!"

"I will, Joey," replied the chevalier; and knocking with his hand upon the door the constable appeared and gave him exit.

CHAPTER LIX.

AN ESSAY UPON FORCE OF CHARACTER—MR. LONGSHANKS MAKES USE OF PUNCH IN A WAY IT WAS NEVER USED BEFORE—HE IS OVER-CONFIDENT—JOEY PIKE TAKES AN AIRING—HE FORGETS HIS PROMISE—A CONSTABLE KILLS A PIG IN SINGLE COMBAT.

As the reader knows, the distance from the village of Outrun to the town of Market Greenford was not great, and a ride of twenty minutes brought the chevalier and Harry Worrel to the door of the Half Moon. They rode at a pretty tolerable pace, it is true, for they were hack horses you know, reader, and if you expect either a commissioner of lunacy or a lunatic commissioner to spare a hack horse you are very much mistaken. Besides, the chevalier was in haste, and when he arrived, as he expected, he found all the magistrates up and stirring—a bowl of hot punch, in order to clear their intellects upon a very momentous question which was at that moment going on amongst them. They were ranged on each side of a table, but neither Mr. Puddenstream, nor Mr. Rotundity, nor Mr. Longmore, was at the top of the table. No: Mr. Longshanks himself occupied the chair of state, with a ladle in his hand and his cocked hat upon his head.

“How came he there?” the reader asks. Simply by force of character, sir—force of character, which not only carries men into the highest stations, but keeps them there too. The man who yields to the pressure from without may reckon the days of his ministry numbered, whatever may be the measures he is called to perform. Church, state, law, army, in each a man must judge by his own lights, and if he have not light enough he had better put on his nightcap and go to bed. Simply by the force of character was Mr. Longshanks there, reader; but it must be remembered that that force of character showed itself in every action and in every situation of his life, as I have endeavoured to impress upon you by various remarkable exemplifications. There was no question whatsoever could be brought before him, on which he had not formed an opinion. He had used his reason, rightly or wrongly, in every thing; he had taken his stand, formed his determination, and there he was, ready to do battle on the point at issue with any one and every one. Such are the characters, reader, from which the men must be selected who rule the world, and even those who are not chosen for such a high office, generally, if they like it, rule the society round them.

Mr. Longshanks had come thither upon business, and he had instantly taken the first place. Thus he was at the head of the table, as I have said, with his cocked hat upon his head and the ladle in his hand, the punch before him and the magistrates and glasses around. He had helped Mr. Deputy Popeseye to a ladle full of punch, and he

was in the act of replying to a crudity which had fallen from the lips of Mr. Puddenstream.

"I tell you, sir," he said, "it must be so, and it shall be so. You are as fit to be a magistrate, sir, as this bowl of punch—nay, not half so fit; for here we find the true representation of justice tempered with mercy, energy with consideration. Here, sir, we have the sour decision of the lemon juice, the sweet softness of the lump sugar, the fiery vigour of the spirit, with the happy medium of the hot water. A clove of law and a scrape of prudential nutmeg give spice to the whole, and prevent the flatulence of official pride. What, sir, can be a better emblem of an excellent magistrate? But now, tell me, sir, which of these qualities do you show in wishing to detain a man in prison till to-morrow who ought to be set free to-night? No spirit, for such an act is dull as ditch water; no sugar, for it is a bitter injustice; and if, as I grant, there be any sourness in it, it is the sourness of stale beer and not of the citron, the unwholesome decomposition of a homely household beverage, and not the fragrant juice of a fine and salutary fruit. It is no use answering, sir, for Joey is already sent for, and I and the rest of the magistrates will stay here and examine into his case, whatever you may think fit to do. Take some punch, sir, take some punch; it is the best thing that has gone into your mouth or come out of it to-day."

Mr. Puddenstream was always bewildered in the presence of Mr. Longshanks; that gentleman was so rapid, and eke so excited, that the worthy magistrate did not know where to have him for full five minutes after the speech was over; so he sat, and sulked, and drank his punch, meditating what it would have been better to say if he had but had the readiness to say it. In the presence of all others Mr. Puddenstream was a great man, in the presence of Mr. Longshanks he was lost.

"Ah! chevalier, ah! Harry Worrel," cried Mr. Longmore, "here's our friend Longshanks requires us, before we return to Outrun Castle, to examine into the case of Joey Pike, who ought to be set at liberty he says—first, because he is not committed upon the coroner's warrant; and secondly, because he himself can show, beyond all doubt, that Joey had no hand in the murder of old Scapulary."

"I and the chevalier can show that," replied Harry Worrel: "he was with us at the time; and besides, he had no motive."

"I can't tell that," said Mr. Puddenstream.

"Then he should be set at liberty till you can," replied Mr. Longshanks; "and perhaps you ought to take his place."

"Do you mean to say, sir"—cried Mr. Puddenstream, rising in wrath.

"I mean to say, sir," said Mr. Longshanks, interrupting him, "that any man who sends another to prison without reasonable cause, ought to be sent to prison himself, to let him see how he likes it."

"But, my excellent friend," said Harry Worrel, anxious to put an end to a debate which, however disagreeable to other people, entertained the Chevalier de Lunatico highly, "do you not think Joey

could be kept here quietly in the inn till we have gone to Outrun Castle, and——”

“And played the fool and the devil,” said Mr. Longshanks, “in search of a girl who is not there. A very sweet, dear, pretty, good girl she is, God bless her; but she is not there, Harry Worrel. I tell you she is not there. I will be answerable for it. In the meantime, ask if they have sent for Joey Pike.”

Joey Pike, indeed, was sent for, and to his great joy some three quarters of an hour after the chevalier had left him, the constable came in and told him he was wanted before the magistrates at the Half Moon. Joey sprang up in the attitude of the dancing fawn, but his joy was soon somewhat quelled by the constable scratching his head and saying—

“I think I ought to put the cuffs upon you, Master Joey.”

“Ah, no, no, no!” cried Joey, putting himself into an attitude of adjuration: “*per pietà, mon connétable*. I promise thee, I swear to thee, I will make not the slightest effort to escape. I will walk beside thee like a lamb to the slaughter. I will——”

“Well, well,” said the constable, “I’ll trust ye, my lad; but hang me if you run if I don’t shoot ye. So come along—look here, I’ve got a pistol,” and away they went out of Market Greenford by the quietest way, but not quite escaping the company of some half dozen boys whom Joey’s singular dress drew after him with all powerful attraction. Unbonneted, unshawled, unwigged, as we have before described him, the hermaphrodite prisoner jogged on by the side of the constable, with the boys following and hooting a little, and Joey striving to conceal his mortification by talking eagerly to the officer, till, issuing out from amongst the last houses of the town, the road passed through some fields and broken ground, beyond which, at the distance of about half a mile, was seen the wall and trees of Outrun park. Suddenly, as they were passing some low hawthorn bushes upon a green, Joey exclaimed—“Ah! *Dieu, c’est lui!*” and, utterly forgetful of his own promise and the constable’s threat, away he darted like a madman over the common.

The constable exclaimed, “Stop, damme, stop, or I’ll shoot you, by ——;” and as he spoke he ran. The boys ran too, but Joey ran faster. Away scampered a herd of pigs, out sprang a man from behind the hawthorn bushes, and ran faster than any, while Joey, shouting “Stop him, stop him,” dashed on at full speed, and the constable, drawing forth his pistol, cocked it as he ran along. How the boys shouted! how the pigs galloped! how the geese flew and squalled! It was the work of an instant, as novelists say; and almost at the same moment the man who fled before Joey ran up to his neck in a pond; Joey rushed in after him, and caught him by the throat; the constable fired, and, shooting a pig through the body, fell headlong over the corpse, while all the little boys surrounded the pond and gave one universal yell of delight.

CHAPTER LX.

MR. LONGSHANKS PROVED IF THE WRONG—THE FUGITIVE DISCOVERED—THE
PEER'S RESOLVE—LAURA DECEIVED.

MR. LONGSHANKS was a great man, but he was no more than a man after all; and a certain degree of rashness and precipitancy, very difficult to be separated from rapidity of combination and decision of character, were the blemishes which appeared in his truly fine mind. Now, what was the consequence of these blemishes on the present occasion? Why that Mr. Longshanks undertook to say a thing that he knew nothing about. He undertook to say that Laura Longmore was not in Outrun Castle, and we aver that he could not know whether she was there or not. He believed her to be sitting in his own library, quietly reading Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or some other of the few good, decent, and decorous books which our ancestors have transmitted to us. But Laura Longmore was not there, and therefore he had no right to say where she was. To give the reader more insight into the matter, and yet to keep him utterly in the dark, we will beg his company for five or ten minutes more in Outrun Castle, at the precise moment and period of the day when the chevalier quitted it after having been upon his morning expedition to Viscount Outrun, and before the magistrates made their ill-starred visit. The reader will be pleased to remember the exact arrangement of time in all the wonderful events we have related, and especially how the chevalier paid his respects at the house of the Rev. Dr. Hookham and his elegant and respectable lady. Well, then, no sooner had the chevalier taken his departure than in came a servant, saying, "Here's Tim, my lord, the looker-out, says he's got something to tell your lordship."

"What is it?" cried Viscount Outrun, in a sharp tone, for to say the truth he was somewhat cross; "what is it he has to tell?"

"He won't say, my lord," replied the footman. "I tried to pump him, but he's as tight as a tea-caddy."

"When it is locked," added the peer, thinking the simile incomplete as it stood. "Send him in, send him in. Some mare's nest, I suppose."

"Here, Tim, come in and speak with his lordship," said the servant going to the door; and in rolled a bumpkin, with a thin scattered head of hair, a very wide mouth, a bend in the hams, gained by the habit of standing for twenty years during the greater part of every day from the first of September till the beginning of February, with his knees bowed, his hands upon his knees, and his head bent forward in order to peer from under the branches of some fir trees on the look out for poachers.

"He, he, he!" cried the man as soon as he entered, after making a low duck of the head. "He, he, he, I've found un out, my lord."

"The devil you have!" cried the peer; "and who is ~~she~~?"

"Why she to be sure, my lord," replied the man. "She that I helped to catch the night of the fire at Ivy Hall, and as the folks were looking after all yesterday."

"Ho, ho!" cried the peer, "and where has my little fox taken earth? She's a famous little jade. By jingo! I am half in love with her myself. Where has she hid herself, man, where has she hid herself?"

"Why at Surgeon Longshanks' to be sure," replied the man; "every one as wants some one to help them goes there; and as I was dodging about there looking arter that rascal Smalldram, who has been up to his old tricks again, picking up leverets and that like, I saw Miss Laura over the garden hedge, so I comed to tell your lordship."

"That is right, that is right," cried the peer; "but after all," he continued, "I don't know what's to be done. By jingo! one may get into a mess. I think I'll just let her alone, though it's a great bore to be baulked too——"

Just as he spoke Jerry Tripe entered the room—Jerry Tripe with his face pale, not from sickness but from emotion.

"Terrible news, my lord," he cried; "terrible news——" and then he stopped short, seeing the worthy Timotheus who instead of striking the sounding lyre was now standing with his knees bent and his hands upon his knees as we have before described him, peeping into the viscount's face to see if he could discover his opinion, just as he would have peeped under a holly bush for a cock pheasant.

"What's the news, Jerry, what's the news?" cried the peer. "By jingo, I am just like the commander-in-chief of an army, with all my scouts coming in."

Jerry laid his right finger upon his proboscis and glanced at Timothy.

"Well, well," said his noble master, "you can whisper. Tim, go into that corner, turn your face to the wall, and stop both your ears, sir."

Tim did as he was bid, presenting as round a stern as any new ship in her majesty's navy.

"Now, Jerry, now," cried the peer, "fire away;" and Jerry bringing his mouth as near to his lordship's ear as the circumstances of his nose would admit, he said something in so low a tone that it escaped our hearing.

"By jingo!" cried the peer, "you don't say so. Who to, who to, Jerry, I say?"

"Ay, that I can't tell, my lord," replied Jerry. "All I know is, that they are gone for a licence. That I ferretted from the other man, Winterton. I dare say it's some trull though—you know he always had a fancy that way."

"I'll—I'll—I'll," cried the peer—"I'll do for him. I'll cut him off with a shilling."

"Has your lordship got one?" said Jerry Tripe. "If not, I shall be very happy to advance a small sum."

"By jingo, Jerry, I'll marry again," cried the peer. "I'll marry

Laura Longmore myself, get her fortune, and clear off the debt. She'll be Viscountess Outrun, that's all any girl cares about; and then we'll tap the '87, and have a roaring wedding. Hark ye, Tim, come here—you're sure what you've told me is true?"

"That I am, my lord," cried the man, bobbing. "I see'd her with my own eyes as plain as ever I see a hare in a furrow."

"And now can you be secret as a mouse in a Parmesan cheese?" demanded the peer.

"That I can, my lord," replied the man. "I'll do any that your lordship likes."

"That's what I call being a faithful servant," exclaimed Lord Outrun. "Now then get together the keepers and your brethren of the look-out department. I will write a little note to Miss Longmore, begging her to come and see her father immediately, along with the bearer. You are to take the note, and to tell her he is at the Half-Moon at Outrun—He is there, so it's a no lie."

"I don't care for that, my lord," replied the veracious Timothy, "so as I pleases your lordship."

"Thou art the prince of devotees," cried the peer. "But listen, Tim, listen. Station the keepers and the other lookers in one of the sand-pits upon the moor, as near the park walls as you well can: then take her along, pass the pit, and the moment she appears let your ambuscade start out and surround her. Then bring her into the park as fast as possible—but gently, you know, gently. Now go and get them together while I write the note. Jerry Tripe, Jerry Tripe," continued the viscount as soon as Timothy was gone, "I was always a decided man—was I not, Jerry Tripe?"

"That your lordship always was," replied Jerry, "and have drank more claret, spent more money, and horsewhipped more men, women, and children, than any other man now living in Europe, I believe.—Oh, yes, a very decided man, indeed. You never stuck at half measures, or half bottles either."

"No," said the peer, "and if I did, you drank them, Jerry," said the peer.

"That I did, my lord," said Jerry with a sigh—sweet memory coming up with her lambent flame, and casting a pale and somewhat melancholy light over the ocean of various kinds of liquor which had gone down his throat, never to return.

"Well then, Jerry," cried his lordship, "this shall be the crowning act of my whole life. If profligate Freddy Fitzurse chooses to disgrace himself, as you suppose he will, and as I doubt not is likely to be the case, from his going to get a marriage-licence without my will and consent, I will marry Laura Longmore myself, saddle the Outrun estates with a large settlement, and have half a dozen younger children to punish him as he deserves."

"My lord, your resolution is worthy of an old Roman," said Jerry Tripe; "and when you are making your will, I hope you will not forget your humble servant. There is the pair of great branch candlesticks, which I have cleaned for thirty years, and I don't think either they or I would survive it if we were parted."

"You shall have them, Jerry, you shall have them," said the peer; "my son is unworthy of branch candlesticks. Now bring me some paper and a pen and ink, that I may write this note to pretty Laura Longmore;" and sitting down he traced with as fine and steady a hand as he could command an artful note to the fair Laura, telling her merely that she was requested to come instantly to see her father at the Half-Moon at Outrun, where he was by no means well. "The bearer," continued the note, "is sent to accompany Miss Longmore in case of danger."

"There, Jerry, there," cried the peer, "run and see if the men are ready. We must not lose a moment's time; for if that old humbug Longshanks gets home from his round, our plot will be inevitably destroyed."

In two minutes Jerry Tripe returned with the information that enough of gamekeepers and assistants were collected for the proposed purpose, and after having called them all into his presence, and harangued them upon their several spheres of action, the peer gave them each a glass of brandy, and dismissed them upon their enterprise.

"Now, Jerry," cried the viscount when they were gone, "you go out into the park, and keep a good watch in order that our friends may neither run against my disobedient son Freddy, nor those driving magistrates from Outrun. Go, Jerry, go, and use all your eyes!"

The devoted Jerry did go, and, as the reader knows, became a sacrifice to his obedience to his master's commands.

In the meantime the keepers and the important messenger bearing the viscount's note hurried with all speed by the shortest ways towards the house of Mr. Longshanks. A comfortable sandpit was soon found, in which the posse ensconced itself, while the valiant Timothy ran rather than walked till he reached the gate of Mr. Longshanks' house.

"Here, master," he said to the servant who answered his summons, "you are to give that to Miss Longmore, and tell her I wait for an answer."

The man took it in, and Laura came out the next moment, with some doubts and apprehensions, it is true, but still too much alarmed by the account of her father's illness to give her judgment fair play.

"Who sent you with this note," she demanded on seeing the man.

This question might have been what is called a poser to some people; but Timothy was as cunning as Isaac, and he at once replied—

"It was Mrs. Muggins, ma'am, the landlady of the Half-Moon. I don't know what it is about, but she seemed in a vast hurry."

This reply succeeded in deceiving Laura; and running to get a cloak, which she borrowed from Mr. Longshanks' housekeeper, she came back in a minute, and told the man to lead the way as fast as possible. He took her instantly at her word, and they had not been gone from the door ten minutes when the Chevalier de Lunatico, as we have before related, came to inquire after his fair young friend.

CHAPTER LXI.

THE BOYS OF OUTRUN DISPLAY THE PECULIARITIES OF BOYS IN OTHER PLACES—
MR. LONGSHANKS DISCOURSES UPON DEVIL'S DROPS—MR. PUDDENSTREAM SHOWS
HIS AVERSION FOR TRUTH—THE SADDLE IS PUT UPON THE RIGHT HORSE.

"HURRA, hurra, hurra!" cried all the boys of Outrun, as their friend Joey Pike was marched in between two constables, and their other friend, Thomas Smalldram, Esq. came in between two others. "Hurra, hurra, hurra!" and never were a set of boys happier or more delighted at any event than the youth of Outrun, or as we should call them now-a-days, "young Outrun," were with the spectacle before them.

Now two things will immediately strike the reader with surprise—first, that we have multiplied our constable by four; secondly, that the boys of Outrun should be so rejoiced at the captivity and danger of two persons whom we have called their friends; and friends certainly they were, for Joey had always been an especial favourite since he had played in those streets himself, and Mr. Smalldram had also gained wonderfully upon the affection of the juveniles by teaching them excellent methods of pitch-and-toss, the mysteries of nine holes, the classical game of mutton bones, and various tiny sorts of gambling, in which he cheated them from time to time out of a few halfpence without ever letting them perceive it. The explanation of the first curious point, namely, the magical multiplication of constables, we shall reserve for an after period. The theory of the boys' laughter we should scarcely ourselves venture to touch upon, but as Mr. Longshanks was of a bolder character, he did so at once with very little ceremony. As soon as the first hurra was heard, he went at once to the window to see what it was about, and on perceiving the facts, he drew in his head, saying to the chevalier—

"Look there, my dear sir! See how the imps are rejoicing, yet I have seen Joey Pike there patting the heads of those little ragamuffins as kindly as possible."

"The young people of Outrun must be of a peculiarly wicked and depraved race, then, I suppose," said the chevalier.

"Not at all, chevalier, not at all," cried Mr. Longshanks. "There you behold one curious but invariable point in that damnsd thing, human nature. The devil, sir, the devil furnishes to every mother's son of us, as soon as we are born, a certain portion of cruelty, which is, in all ordinary cases, greater in the child than in the man, wearing out by degrees as we go on through life and endure suffering in our own persons. The exceptions, of course, confirm the general rule, and you must not think that the example of him who burnt the flies in his

mature years, or any of the Tiberian races, or even of Mr. Puddenstream here"—and speaking aloud, he pointed him out with his finger—"though they retained and even increased the stock of cruelty with which they set out, is any refutation of my proposition, for we see it all through life; the infant begins by pulling a fly to pieces, the boy torments the toad, or the frog, or the mouse; the youth indulges in catching fish upon a hook, or breaking birds' arms and legs with shot, or slaughtering a hare, or massacring a family of foxes: and it is not till a man gets to be fifty or sixty that he feels any thing like charity or compassion for the creatures around him. This is the reason that when young men have any thing to do with the government it is always bloody, cruel, and barbarous. The devil's drop is not worn out of them, sir; and if you will examine the records of crime you will find that almost all murders are committed between eighteen and thirty-five—earlier they are too weak to do much mischief, afterwards they are too wise. But you may see at all periods the devil's drop bubbling up in human nature, and rejoicing at misery, and sorrow, and anguish. The younger the more ferocious—Just listen to the little savages, how they are rejoicing over the sorrows of a fellow-creature!"

He had scarcely done speaking when in came the four constables and the two prisoners, Mr Small dram and his accompaniments going first.

"Please your worship we've got un," said one of the officers, addressing Mr. Longshanks; but immediately the voice of the other constable, who had charge of Joey Pike, halloed out, "You got un? You didn't get un, it was Joey Pike got un—didn't ye, Joey? He got un out of the middle of the heath pond, and he swears as how that he murdered old Scap. and he can prove it. Then up came these three fellers and said they had a warrant from your worship again him for the same offence."

"They said true, they said true," said Mr. Longshanks, walking back to the top of the table which he had quitted and seating himself solemnly in the arm chair. "Take away the punch, Mrs. Muggins, it is not fit that we should be drinking punch and regaling ourselves while we are inquiring into a matter which involves such awful considerations as the murder of a fellow-creature, which has undoubtedly been committed, and the death of a fellow-creature by the cruel punishment of strangulation which is likely to be the result. I shall propose, gentlemen," he continued, not attending to Mrs. Muggins, who pulled him delicately by the coat tail—"I shall propose that before entering upon the re-examination of Joseph Pike we examine the other prisoner, Thomas Small dram. What is it, woman? I cannot speak to you now."

"Widow Scapulary, sir," said Mrs. Muggins, "is in the parlour, and wants to speak to their worships."

"Keep her there, keep her there, woman," said Mr. Longshanks, "and don't pull my coat tails. The broadcloth is good, but it will tear. Tell Mrs. Scapulary that we shall require her evidence. Where is the clerk? You drunken sot, what are you drinking the punch for?"

"Why, sir, I am very thirsty," replied the clerk, setting down the

bowl which he had seduced out of Mrs. Muggins's hands, "I ran up in a great hurry."

"Well, then, sit down in a great hurry," said Mr. Longshanks, "mend your pens, and take down the depositions."

"Before the worshipful John Longshanks, Esq. and a full bench of magistrates, in special session assembled," said the clerk, reading, "'sitting *pro tem.* at the sign of the Half Moon in the parish of Outrun, and county of—God save the king! Do I put down God save the king?"

"No, you fool!" said Mr. Longshanks, "only write down the depositions; that is all you have to do. Stand forward, prisoner. What is your name?"

"My name is——" said Mr. Small dram.

"Stop, prisoner, stop!" cried Mr. Puddenstream. "Remember you are not bound to answer that there question, if you think that your reply may criminate yourself."

Mr. Longshanks started up, and whirled round three times like a top in a state of rotation. "The man will drive me mad!" he cried, throwing down his cocked hat on the table, and putting his elbow into the crown. "What is your name, I say?"

"My name is——" said Mr. Small dram once more; but Mr. Puddenstream again exclaimed. Remember it will be put down, and used against you at your trial."

"Good name in man or woman, good my lord, is the immediate jewel of the soul," said the voice of Joey Pike from behind in slow and mellifluous accents.

"Put that fool out of the room!" cried Mr. Longshanks. "On my life, the knaves in this world are bad enough, but the fools are intolerable; and to have to do with fools when one is examining knaves is worse than all. Will you be so good, Mr. Puddenstream, as to allow the prisoner to answer a straightforward and merely formal question without any farther interruption?"

"Sir, I shall act as I have acted," replied Mr. Puddenstream, "on my own sense of justice. I take it, every prisoner ought to be warned not to say any thing that may criminate himself. Ay, sir, repeatedly. I have always heard it done."

"By fools and country justices," replied Mr. Longshanks. "It is all very right, I dare say, that the prisoner should not be compelled to say any thing to criminate himself: the law directs it, and the law is right. It is also expedient, lest the prisoner should make a mistake in the matter, that he should be once informed that the law does allow him to refuse to reply; but this having been done, the man is as great a noodle who goes on repeating the same thing, and instigating the prisoner to withhold information, as that man is a knave who induces him by false hopes to make a confession. If the man chooses to tell the truth, why should you stop him? What is it we want but truth? What is the great basis of justice but truth? What is the object of all inquiries? Truth; and the man who stops us from coming at the truth has but a sorry choice. He stands between roguery and folly, sir, and is either a knave or an ass. So if you attempt to stop us any farther,

sir, you may class yourself as you like. I don't envy your predicament. Once more, prisoner, what is your name?"

"My name"—replied Mr. Small dram.

"Well," said Mr. Pudden stream, "if the prisoner is fully aware that he is by no means obliged to answer the question unless he likes, and he chooses to answer the question freely and voluntarily, I have nothing to do with it."

But even Mr. Small dram himself was tired of the constant interruption, as even the very lowest and most virulent democrats are tired and disgusted when they see the business of a great country continually interrupted by useless, idle, and absurd adjournments.

"My name," he cried, "is Thomas Small dram. What's the use of going humbugging about criminating myself all day long? That's all my eye and Betty. I'm not ashamed of my name—Thomas Small dram, that's my name. Some people used to call me Short-hocked Tom the tinman, and others, Warty Tom, on account of them here warts on the side of my nose. But that's not the right thing—Thomas Small dram, that's my name."

"Thomas Small dram, *alias*, Short-hocked Tom the tinman, *alias*, Warty Tom," read the clerk.

"Hold your tongue, you fool," cried Mr. Longshanks, "who took you to speak?"

"What is your profession?"

"Tinman and rabbit seller," replied the prisoner, before he could be interrupted.

"And your age?" inquired Alderman Rotundity.

"Remember you are not bound to answer that question if you think; thereby you are likely to criminate yourself," exclaimed Mr. Pudden stream.

"My wife wouldn't answer it if she were here. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Mr. Deputy Popeseye.

"Be serious, sir, be serious," said Mr. Longshanks, "you are not eating venison or gloating over turtle now. Such cachinnations may very well befit the civic hall while men are pampering their own ungodly bellies at an expense that would feed thousands that are passing in starvation by the door; but they are not good in matters of life and death. Do you answer the question, prisoner?"

"Somewhere upward of fifty," replied Mr. Small dram, "I am not particular to a day, seeing I never insured my life, and therefore have had no occasion for the register."

"Now, what is the evidence against this man?" continued Mr. Longshanks. "Where's Nelly Bain?"

"Nelly Bain, Nelly Bain," cried one of the constables, and in came Nelly Bain, with a somewhat seared look, as if she were not altogether happy and at her ease under the circumstances in which she was placed.

"Now, what have you got to say, Nelly?" proceeded Mr. Longshanks. "You examine her, Rotundity, will you? I have a particular reason."

"What evidence have you to give in this case?" asked Mr. Rotundity.

city, in his usual clear and kindly tones, slightly enlivened with a happy opinion of himself. "The principal facts, the principal facts, Mrs. Bain. Do not dwell upon trifles—it is not necessary *nugis addere pondus*." "Cod's my life! this is as bad as the other," muttered Mr. Longshanks to himself. "She doesn't understand Latin, Rotundity. Greek—Greek's her forte, man. Try her in Greek."

Mr. Rotundity blushed slightly, gave a shy glance at the chevalier, and then went on to ask—"What do you know of this man, Mrs. Bain?" "Why, sir," replied Nelly Bain, "he has been hanging about my cottage for a long time, coming up of a night and thrusting his hand under the thatch;" and she proceeded to give a detailed account of all that had taken place at her cottage which, as the reader already knows every thing about it, we shall not repeat in the exact words of the excellent widow.

"I produce the spectacles and case," said Mr. Longshanks, laying them on the table. "Call my groom—call Williamson."

"Mr. Williamson," shouted the constable, and the groom appeared with a straw stuck between his two foreteeth.

"Stay—go away, Williamson, go away again," cried Mr. Longshanks. "Prisoner, if you have any questions to ask Widow Bain you are at liberty to do so."

"Can you swear that it was me, Widow Bain?" cried Small dram, fixing his eyes somewhat fiercely upon her. But the widow answered in a decided though quiet manner—

"I can swear that it was you the two last times, for I saw you quite well; and though I did not see you so clearly the first, I can swear it was the same man."

"You're a great liar," cried Small dram, fiercely; and he then muttered between his teeth—"damn me, if I don't do for thee."

"Have you any other question to ask?" said Mr. Rotundity.

"No; she would only lie if I did," replied the man.

"Now then for Williamson," said Mr. Longshanks, and the groom being once more called in confirmed fully the latter part of Mrs. Bain's statement, showing how he and his master had seen Small dram scramble out of the ditch, and had afterwards discovered old Scapulary's spectacles under the thatch.

Small dram declined asking him any questions, and immediately after Mr. Longshanks said, after pausing to give the man time—"There is quite sufficient evidence I think to remand him for farther examination; but yet it is only fair to let him know all that may be brought against him. Therefore, before we ask him what he has to say we had better examine the next witness as *she* is ready to be sworn. Call the next witness."

One of the constables went out and called for the next witness, when to the surprise of the magistrates, who had remarked that Mr. Longshanks used the personal pronoun of the feminine gender, in walked a personage in corduroy breeches and leather gaiters, who pulled a short bunch of hair on the front of his forehead as he approached the end of the table.

"Who the devil are you?" said Mr. Longshanks, looking at him through a pair of spectacles?

"Why, I am Michael Growl, the milkman," said the gentleman who had appeared, pulling the lock again as hard as before. "I heard as how you wanted witnesses, so I comed to say all I knowas."

"And how much may that be?" said Mr. Longshanks, sharply.

"Whoy a good deal," replied the man. "You see, I was at the beginning o't."

"The deuce you were!" said Mr. Longshanks; "do you mean at the murder?"

"No, no," replied the man; "but you see I warn't examined before the crowner's 'quest, and that 'ere Mrs. Scapulary swore falsely; for she said as how that she came to buy milk at our house at half-past five, and it were ten minutes arter six when she come. I'll tell you how I know——"

"Not much matter, I should think," said Mr. Puddenstream, "whether it were a few minutes before, or a few minutes after."

"Ay, that may be," said the man; "but it warn't true, nevertheless."

"Speak, speak," said Mr. Longshanks, impatiently. "Never mind what that man says; he's an ass. Tell us how you know Mrs. Scapulary made a mistake?"

"Whoy, you see," said the milkman, "I were a going down loike to see what kept our Peggy so long in the meadow; and just as I turned the corner by the church, and see a heap of boys playing in the church-yard—my boy were among 'em—who should bolt out of old Scapulary's door, which were, as it might be, a hundred and fifty yards off, but this here man, Small dram, and he scuttles him across the road for all the world like a turnspit-dog, and over the stile and away; and I says to myself, says I, 'You bin arter no good, you varmint you!' and so then I walked on down the lane, and presently I meets Joey Pike coming up in a vast hurry——"

"From, or towards old Scapulary's house?" asked Mr. Longshanks, as quick as a percussion-gun.

"Towards, to be sure," replied the milkman. "I were past the house by that time, and the pond too; and presently arter—it might be three or four hundred steps down the lane—I found our Peggy, with the huntsmen all a bothering on her, one asking her for some milk, and another for a kiss, and all that sort o' thing; so I took her by the arm, and I says, 'Come along, Peg,' says I, 'we've had quite enough of that in the village'—I was thinking of poor Betsy Trollop, I was—and I turned back with her; and just as we were coming near old Scapulary's house, out bolted Joey Pike, and I thought to myself, 'What can make him run so?' and then Peggy told me that she thought there had been a duel down farther in the lane, for she see'd six gentlemen all of a heap together, and one had a pistol in his hand, and one was a lying on his back, and Joey Pike was one of the party, and Master Tripe, who is a very good friend of mine, was another. So all I thought was, what fools they must be to go a fighting on a fine morning, when it's much pleasanter to take a walk; and I then looked up.

at the clock, and I see that it was just five minutes after six, and I put my watch right by it; and when I got to the corner of the street, I see'd Mrs. Scapulary walking on toward our house, a good bit afore us, not walking fast, but daisied like, as if she had got a drop too much. She was there when we got in, and, my eye! how she did smell of gin!"

"Then can you positively swear," said Mr. Longshanks, "that the first person you saw who came out of old Scapulary's house was the prisoner at the bar?"

"I doan't see no bar," replied the man; "but that was he—Tom Smalldram there."

"And was there any one else in the road when you came back again?" inquired Mr. Puddenstream.

"To be sure there were," answered the milkman. "There was Jack the gardener; and Joey almost knocked him down, he came out with such a bolt."

"Can you swear it was I you saw first?" exclaimed the worthy tinman, whose face had changed some forty or fifty times, as he saw the dim phantom of a rope, with a noose at the end of it, dangling unpleasantly before his eyes at every word. "I can prove an *alibi*. Can you swear it was I?"

"That I can," said the milkman, sturdily. "Do ye think I doan't know ye, ye varmint? If we knew the rats as well, we should have fewer on 'em. But, howsomdever, as I was a saying, Mother Scap asked for some milk; but she was so queer that we all said she was drunk, and I sent Peg arter her to see she got safe hoame."

Mr. Smalldram thought, by this time, it would be better to reserve his defence, so he asked no more questions; and the examination of the milkman being concluded, the girl Peggy was sent for, and not only confirmed the milkman's account, but moreover declared that she had seen Joey Pike go away from the spot where the duel had been fought with Mr. Worrel and "that gentleman with the long nose," she added, pointing to the Chevalier de Lunatico, who nodded to her in return, with a complacent twinkle of the clear grey eye, for the girl was rosy in cheek, pretty in feature, and delectable to look upon. "He ran along the lane," she said, "after a bit very fast, but when she came down from the high field in which she was, she lost sight of him, and in a moment or two after met her master, and walked on along the lane."

"How long might it be before you saw Joey Pike again?" demanded Mr. Puddenstream.

"Not more than three minutes, your worship," said the girl, bobbing till her petticoats, which were short, swept the floor.

"And where was he then?" asked the same magistrate.

"Coming out of Master Scapulary's, sir," said the girl, "and looking very much frightened."

In the meanwhile, Mr. Longshanks had been looking over some papers which had been brought to him while the examination was going on, and now raising his head he inquired—

"When you followed Mrs. Scapulary, did you see her speak to any body till she got home?"

"No, sir, not a living soul," said the girl, "for there was not a soul in the street."

"And you saw her enter her own door?" said Mr. Longshanks.

"Yes, sir, that I did," replied the girl; and thus ended her examination.

"Now call in Mrs. Scapulary," said Mr. Longshanks; and the face of Small dram the tinman became like the face of Yamen, a rusty brown.

"Cuss those women," thought Mr. Small dram, "there's no depending on 'em. She's just as likely to make some blunder as not."

But what was his surprise when, on being led into the court, Widow Scapulary looked at him with an unaffected shudder, and cried—

"Ah! the wretch!"

"Meaning me, ma'am?" said Mr. Small dram, with a significant look. "You are a sweet creetur, and I should be sorry to do you a mischeef, but you musn't call me a wretch, you know."

"But you are a wretch," said Mrs. Scapulary, "you are a wretch, if, as I am afraid, you injured that poor dear old man."

"Ho, ho!" said Mr. Small dram, "if that's the go, I understand the lay. I thought it was all Joey Pike's doing; but now——"

"Silence, sir!" cried Mr. Longshanks. "You shall have an opportunity of asking the witness any questions afterwards. Swear her, clerk. Now, madam, what do you know of this man?"

It was an awkward question, for assuredly Mrs. Scapulary knew more of him than she liked to tell; but she had now made up her mind, and, as we have said before, Mrs. Scapulary was a very cunning woman. She was as shrewd as the edge of a razor; and in the present instance she went to work as carefully and cautiously as it is possible to conceive. She brought all the hints that she had lately been giving in regard to Mr. Small dram to bear upon the present question, and those had not been a few, for, as we have seen, she had contemplated within five minutes from the time that poor Mr. Scapulary parted with the breath of life, upon making her worthy friend and coadjutor Small dram part with his by the same process, but in rather a more public manner. The fright which Mademoiselle Brochet put her into upon more than one occasion had increased her activity in this respect, and she had insinuated to many people, as well as sworn before the coroner, that she had seen Mr. Small dram and spoken with him near the house on the morning of the murder. She now proceeded to give exactly the same account, swearing most virulently that she had gone out for milk at five o'clock in the morning—that she was back by half-past five—that she had seen Mr. Small dram hanging about the door when she went out, and that she found her husband dead when she returned. A lie with a circumstance always being the fashion with liars of an inferior quality, Mrs. Scapulary added before the magistrates the same lie that she had told Joey Pike in the character of Mademoiselle Brochet, namely, that she had heard the clock strike half-past five

When she was at the corner of the road opposite to the church. The magistrates looked at each other, and consulted for a few minutes; every one of them, except Mr. Puddenstream, having remarked the evidence of the milkman and his maid, which completely contradicted that of Mrs. Scapulary. At the same time, Harry Worrel went round and whispered to Mr. Longshanks and Mr. Rotundity—"This woman's evidence would go completely to exculpate Joey Pike, for both the chevalier and I can swear that he never left us from half-past four till six o'clock."

"We will examine you both presently, Harry," said Mr. Longshanks. "Sit down, there's a good boy. Sometimes a fool's act, such as your idiotical duel, is rendered, by the good providence of God, beneficial to society."

Mrs. Scapulary perceived that something was the matter, and she became slightly agitated. She therefore determined at once to bring forward her last grand stroke at Mr. Smalldram, and she said—

"It's a wery shockin' thing to accuse any gentleman of strangling another, and I don't mean to say that he did it, but he got some of the money, that's very clear, for the day before yesterday the landlord of the Black Swan showed me a fi'-pund note which he had of Master Smalldram there, and in the corner, just where my poor dear departed husband," and she wept a little, "used to mark his notes, was written T. S., Toby Scapulary. Sometimes he used to mark 'em so, sometimes Tob. Scap."

"You Blazer," cried Mr. Smalldrum, "ain't you a nice un? Damn me, if I don't blow ye. Don't yer worships see that the woman's a lying? Didn't ye hear what Growl the milkman said? and the truth of the matter is ——"

"Ah, I knew how it would be," cried Mrs. Scapulary; "I was sure the moment I said any thing about it, he would accuse me."

"He has not accused you yet, woman," said Mr. Longshanks; "but now is the moment for me to warn you that you need not say any thing which may criminate yourself."

"Oh I am not afraid," said Mrs. Scapulary, looking as brazen as the sign of the Golden Lion. "He can't say nothing as I'm afraid on."

"Can't I?" said Mr. Smalldram: "then I do say she murdered the old man herself; and if I'm admitted as king's evidence I'll tell all about it. It was she planned it all, and did it, though I don't deny I might have some of the money. Will your worships allow me to turn stag—that is, to be king's evidence?"

"I can't promise that," replied Mr. Longshanks; "that must depend upon the law officers of the crown. Sufficient has been said for our purpose, however, I think. Constable, take Mrs. Scapulary into custody. Clerk, fill up a warrant. Is there any other evidence in this case?"

"Yes, sir," said a small voice; "I saw all about it."

"Come up then, boy, come up," cried Mr. Longshanks, "don't stand there fiddling with the button of your breeches. Do you know what an oath is, boy?"

The boy gave a very satisfactory account of his notions on the subject, and Mr. Longshanks pronounced the authoritative "Swear him!" which being done, the boy declared that on the morning of the murder of Mr. Scapulary, he was seated astride of the wall of the churchyard, while his brother was in a horse-chestnut tree, and their school-fellows were playing at marbles. At a quarter before six, he said, he saw Mr. Small dram bolt out of the house, run through the churchyard stile, quit the path, and jump over the other corner of the wall. Just after six o'clock had struck, he said, he saw Mrs. Scapulary come out, look round about her as if she were in a fluster, and go round the corner into the High-street. Scarcely was she out of sight when he saw Joey Pike come running up the lane from the side of Outrun Castle. He stopped at the door of Mr. Scapulary, knocked, opened the door, and went in. He did not stay a minute, however, said the boy, but came out again directly, looking very much frightened, and ran off as hard as he could go.

"Precisely the story that poor Joey told of himself," said Mr. Longmore, "and which was confirmed by my young friend Worrel, and my excellent friend the chevalier. The stories tally as exactly and fit into each other as nicely as if they had been turned by Holzapfel. Pray, young gentleman, let us know how you ascertained the time so exactly. Had you a sextant with you? Could you get an observation of the sun?"

"I don't understand," said the boy.

"How did you know what o'clock it was?" said Mr. Longshanks.

"By the clock, to be sure," replied the boy; "there was the big clock as strikes the quarters and half hours just up above me."

"Now, Mrs. Scapulary, and you Thomas Small dram, if you have any questions to ask the witness you may ask them," said Mr. Longshanks.

"I've nothing to ask him," said Mr. Small dram; "it's all true enough I dare say."

"When did you say I came out of the house, little wretch?" cried Mrs. Scapulary.

"Two or three minutes arter him," replied the boy, pointing to Small dram, and down fell the widow in a fainting fit, for she had never calculated there was any other eye on her movements but the eye of God; and when we commit evil actions we surely forget that there is even that eye upon us which none can ever evade, while Almighty punishment stands ready with an uplifted sword to smite us in the act.

The widow was soon brought to herself, however, and being asked if she was inclined to make any statement herself, she only gasped in the magistrates' faces for a moment, but said nothing. When the same question was put to Small dram, he replied doggedly, "I am ready to tell all I know if I've a promise of pardon; if not, I'll die game."

"They are both committed," said Mr. Longshanks. "You are all of the same opinion, gentlemen, of course."

There was but one dissentient voice, that of Mr. Puddenstream,

who thought they ought to be remanded, but he was overruled, the warrant of committal signed, and the prisoners removed.

"Now," said Mr. Longshanks, "nothing remains but to discharge the warrant which has been issued against poor Joey Pike."

"To be sure, to be sure, to be sure," cried all the other magistrates except the one who was fond of solitude in his opinions, who muttered something to himself, making a sort of protest to the inkstand, at which he was looking at the moment; and accordingly the warrant against Joey was discharged, and the constables told to set him free.

"Now," said Mr. Longshanks, rising, "I think, gentlemen, you will own that justice, propriety, and common sense required us to proceed with this business without farther delay, and before you set out upon any expeditions against Outrun Castle; and having now concluded what is really important, I shall wish you good evening, and leave you all to play the fool as much as ever you think fit."

CHAPTER LXIII.

MR. FITZURSE FINDS HIMSELF IN DANGER—THE GREAT DARIUS EXPLAINS HIS NOTIONS GASTRONOMIC—TOM HAMILTON ACTS PARANTYPH—HIS GALLOPING MEDITATIONS—HE DOES BATTLE AGAINST ODDS—A FRIEND IN NEED—SOME ACCOUNT OF MR. SMALLDRAM PREVIOUS TO HIS CAPTURE.

"On my life, I dare as soon carry it home as sit upon a bomb-shell with the fuze lighted."

Such were the words of Mr. Fitzurse as he rode away from the door of Dr. Hookham with the marriage licence in his pocket, and Tom Hamilton and Mr. Darius on either hand.

"It can't be done, Tom, it can't be done; either he or that d—d fellow Jerry Tripe would smell it out as a terrier dog does a rat, and I should have them flying at my pocket in five minutes."

"Well then, Fitzurse," replied Tom, "we had better take a gallop across the country, dine at an inn, and make a night of it. Let us go over to Whitebottom, there's some capital fishing up there. You can come back to the church to be married to-morrow you know."

"Ay, but how's she to know that she's to come?" said Mr. Fitzurse, looking at Mr. Darius, as if he wished uncommonly to get rid of him. "Could not our friend here go back and tell her?"

"Why no, I should think not," replied Tom Hamilton—"not without you, considering you first brought him to Outrun Castle; that would be contrary to decorum you know."

"Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Fitzurse, "deorum, and Outrun Castle! Why there has never been such a thing in it since I was born."

"Probably not," said Tom Hamilton drily; "but I'll tell you what, Fitzurse, I'll go back to the castle, see Jane, tell her all about it, get my fishing tackle, and join you at the little inn at Whitebottom in a couple of hours."

"Don't be long, Tom," said Mr. Fitzurse, casting a doubtful glance at Mr. Darius, and then adding in a whisper to his friend—"Tell him to be civil, Tom! Damn it, you know, there's no saying when such a fellow may quarrel with one."

"Oh, don't be afraid, don't be afraid," said Tom Hamilton, pulling up his horse; "I'll speak to him, and, besides, he'll never quarrel with his cousin you know. Here, Darius, just speak to me for a moment. Go on, Fitzurse, we'll come after you in a minute. Go with him, my good friend," he continued, addressing Mr. Darius, as soon as the peer's son was a little in advance—"go with him, keep him in a terrible fright, but don't lose sight of him on any account, or he'll bolt."

"No, no, trust me," replied Mr. Darius, and on he rode after the worthy scion of the house of Outrun, whom he overtook just as a little boy, with a fair face and curly hair crossed the road, trudging away to school.

"A nice boy that, sir," said Mr. Darius, looking at the lad tenderly. "I should like such a boy as that very much."

"Heave you no children of your own?" said Mr. Fitzurse.

"None, sir, none," replied Mr. Darius; "I adopted one when I was in New Zealand."

"And what deed you do with him," said Mr. Fitzurse, "when you came away?"

"Oh, sir, we ate him, we ate him," said Mr. Darius calmly; "the chiefs and I had a great feast, a sort of farewell dinner; and as there was no fresh meat you know, I thought I'd give them a treat. He was as nice a boy as ever I ate in my life. I've got his head now in pickle—a sort of tender memorial of him. I look at it very often—but I'm afraid it's too salt to be good eating now. A very nice-looking boy indeed," he continued, standing up in his stirrups, and looking after the child. "Now do you think people in this country would fancy there was any wrong in it if one were to take a griakin out of a boy like that?"

"Oh, sir, for heaven's sake," cried Mr. Fitzurse, "don't mention such a thing!"

"You can't think how nice it is," said Mr. Darius, lowering his voice to an aguish sort of a whisper, and putting his mouth close to Mr. Fitzurse's ear. "Man's not bad when he's young, but child is delicious! You never ate a child, did you?"

"No," cried Mr. Fitzurse, in a lamentable whine, "I never ate man, woman, or child either. I do not like such things."

"You can't tell, you can't tell," cried Mr. Darius, with a knowing



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wink. "You shall taste a bit of man at my house some day, and then see how you like it."

"Why you'll be hanged you know," said Mr. Fitzurse.

"Oh, not I," said Mr. Darius, "I manage those things quite comfortably. A steak out of a condemned felon isn't a bad thing; it has a game taste you know; but then one can always get a young fool to quarrel with one. Shoot him in a duel, and trust to the resurrection men for the rest."

"Neither more nor less than kill him and eat him," said Mr. Fitzurse.

"There is no law against eating him," said Mr. Darius. "If I kill him in an honourable way, nobody can stop me eating him afterwards; besides, I should think most men would rather like it than otherwise; if we don't eat our friends, the worms will; and, as the great poet has said—

'Fill up, thou canst not injure me,
The worm hath fouler lips than thine.'

No, if we have been of no use during our lives, it is philosophical and beautiful to render ourselves useful after death, and to feed the hungry by a posthumous act of benevolence. As you are going to marry my dear cousin, I shall leave you my corpse by will, and I insist upon your having a large party, and giving them a haunch and a bottle of claret."

Mr. Fitzurse shuddered at the thought, and in such pleasant conversation they passed on their way till they reached the little inn which Mr. Hamilton had designated. In the meanwhile that gentleman himself rode back to Outrun Castle, and arrived a few minutes before the immersion of the magistrates. All the men servants were in full occupation in making preparations for the great event which the viscount contemplated, but Jane was soon found by the mediation of her confidant, Sally; and Tom Hamilton explained to her the pleasing arrangements which had been entered into for transforming her from Jane Markem to the Honourable Mrs. Fitzurse.

"Oh, Mr. Hamilton," she cried, "how kind you have been!"

"Why I promised you, my good girl," said Mr. Hamilton, "that if you would not drown yourself, I would do the best I could for you; but there is one thing I have to tell you, Jane, you'll have to pay ten pounds to a person who has had a hand in this affair—I would pay him myself, but 'pon my life and soul, I can't afford it."

"Oh, I'll pay it, sir, I'll pay it," cried Jane; "I've got forty pounds in the savings' bank, and the viscount owes me twenty more."

"Invest that in a mortgage on the moon," said Tom Hamilton, "and you'll get your interest when the dog-days fall in December.—However you'll soon be his daughter-in-law; so be at the church-door at the hour I've mentioned; there's a good girl, and bring a bridesmaid with you, and I'll be your father for the occasion."

"Lor, Mr. Hamilton," said Jane, with a very pretty arch look; "they'll never take you for my father!"

"Well, my dear, I shall do as well as another," replied Mr. Hamilton; "and now I must be off.—But what's the viscount about?"

"La, I can't tell you, sir," replied Jane; "I think he's mad, for he's gone up to the top of the house, and taken the two coachmen with him, dressed out in their cocked hats and all, as if he were going to drive four-in-hand round the leads."

"I think we must send the chevalier to him," said Tom Hamilton; "so now good-bye, Jane, and mind, when you are Lady Outrun I shall expect you to ask me down every year, for there's devilish good fishing and shooting in the season."

"That I will, Mr. Hamilton," said Jane heartily, "for if it had not been for your fishing, I should have been in the grave;" and Jane, who, upon the whole, was not a bad girl, as upper housemaids go, began to do what is technically called "pipe her eye," whereupon Tom Hamilton, not being fond of tender scenes in general, beat his retreat, mounted his horse, and galloped away.

The musings of Tom Hamilton were of a somewhat mixed and curious nature. He thought to himself, *primo*, that Outrun Castle was rather a rascally sort of place, and a certain feeling of shame at a good many of the goings on in which he had taken part, came over him. But then again he thought, *secundo*, of the shooting and fishing, and he ended, with a sigh, observing to himself—"I don't know better any where."

Did you ever remark, reader, that in any combat with pleasant sin, even when virtue gets the upper hand, like all other really great conquerors, she sighs over her victory; but, in the present instance, virtue had not altogether gained the victory, for although Tom Hamilton acknowledged that Outrun Castle, its scenes, and its inhabitants, were not at all beneficial in their effects upon his morality, he had not got to the pitch of resolving not to go near it again.

Well, reader—though you may think that we have made an unnecessary pause, for what have you to do with Tom Hamilton's morality, or Tom's morality to do with you?—yet we had an object in it, as there is nothing without an object in this wonderful book, and that object was both to let your mind rest a little after all its galloping hither and thither in order that it may be fully refreshed and prepared for the most marvellous and extraordinary scene in the whole book, and also, that comprehending something of Tom Hamilton's character, and especially of his meditations as he went along, you may not be taken by surprise at the part which Tom himself was about to play. Had we merely said that he galloped along as hard as he could go—took his horse over the park wall instead of through the gate, and with a floating rein scampered over the common, you would have beheld in him nothing but the wild, reckless, dashing fellow, who seemed to care for little else so long as he got good fishing and shooting. Nevertheless these same indifferent careless fellows sometimes have laid up in a quiet corner of the heart, better things than they suffer to appear, leaving them there from simple idleness, till they get dusty, and almost forgotten, even by the owners.

Well, while the magistrates, as we have before described, were visiting Outrun Castle, and undergoing immersion in the fire-tank, Tom galloped along, meditating quite as comfortably upon his horse's back as he flew along beating the sounding turf, as if he had been sitting in an arm-chair; and he did not awake from his reverie till passing close by the top of a sand-pit he suddenly heard a woman's voice crying for help. Such a sound instantly opened all the avenues to Tom's heart, and the good feelings which he had cooped up like caged rabbits, put out their noses, ready to take advantage of the opportunity. There was one of the hawthorn trees that we have spoken of close by, and to the ground sprang Tom Hamilton, casting his rein over a branch of the tree, and hurrying down the bank as if a certain personage famed for looking after careless fellows and being busy in gales of wind was behind him. When he got to the bottom of the bank, the sight that he saw made his heart beat, and an uncommonly hot sensation take place about his liver.

Some four or five men were seen behaving in a very uncourteous manner to a young lady, whom they had got in their clutches, one having got hold of her by each arm, and another being in the act of pushing her on by the shoulders, while she wept, and resisted, and called for help in a very piteous manner. In the persons of the men whom he beheld, Tom instantly recognised certain gamekeepers and lookers-out with whom he was somewhat familiar. The young lady he was not so well acquainted with, but he saw in a moment that she was as pretty a creature as the eyes of man can light upon, and, moreover, that there was some degree of resemblance between her, both in features and apparel, and a certain ghost whom he had once had the honour of meeting in the picture-gallery of Outrun Castle. However, we must do justice to Tom's chivalry, whether she had been pretty or not, whether he had known or not known who she was—and it must be acknowledged that he shrewdly suspected her to be no other than fair Laura Longmore—he would have acted exactly in the same manner as we are about to describe.

Without waiting one single moment for consideration, he jumped down the last yard or two of the bank, as soon as he saw what was going on, and walking up to the head gamekeeper of Viscount Outrun, without entering into any tiresome explanations, or putting any unnecessary questions, he planted a blow with the clenched fist of his right hand exactly between the gentleman's two eyes, which in an instant produced the effect of making him quit his hold of fair Laura Longmore, and also caused him to take up suddenly an uneasy position with his back upon the road and his feet and legs kicking up in the air at an angle of forty-five.

"You damned rascal, what are you about?" cried Tom Hamilton, turning upon the other gamekeeper, and aiming a blow at him likewise, which would have had a similar effect upon his conglomeration of atoms, as Mr. Longmore would have termed it, had he not parried the stroke, which he did with some skill and dexterity. In so doing, however, he also loosed his hold of Laura, and knowing that she could be of no possible assistance to her deliverer, our pretty little friend would

instantly have taken to her heels and run, had there not been unfortunately three other men who cut off her retreat.

"Holloa, Mr. Hamilton, what the devil are you up to?" cried the gamekeeper, whom we may term the substantive, as he continued to stand by himself, notwithstanding Mr. Hamilton's strenuous effort to knock him down; "we've my lord's orders for what we do."

"I am up to giving you a hearty good thrashing, my friend," replied Tom Hamilton, with his blood really and truly boiling, "if you don't take yourself off in a minute. You are libelling Lord Outrun; he never told you to treat a lady ill, I'm sure."

"He told us to bring her to the castle, anyhow," replied the man; "and we'll do it, by —."

"Let me get at him, let me get at him," cried the other gamekeeper, rising from the ground, and rushing at Laura's deliverer with all the fury of his fall fresh upon him.

But we have hinted already that Thomas Hamilton, Esq. was skilful of fence and all other manly exercises, and before the gamekeeper could touch him, he had made his fist intimately acquainted with the man's right eye, causing him to perform exactly the same gambol on the ground which he had previously executed.

"On my life and soul, this is too bad," cried the other gamekeeper; "we shall be obliged to lick ye, Mr. Hamilton."

"Lick me?" cried Tom Hamilton, making a feint at the man's nose with his right hand, and almost at the same moment striking him a blow on the jaw with the left, which sent him reeling amongst his companions; "you have mistaken your man, you scoundrels—keep behind me, young lady, and they shall not touch you;—stand off, or by heaven, I'll give the first one that comes near something that sha'n't quit him till his dying day."

"Make a rush upon him—make a rush upon him!" cried one of the gamekeepers. "Stand round, and make a rush upon him."

This proposal was likely to be executed with fatal effect, the ring being formed, and Laura and her defender completely encircled; when in amongst the gamekeepers and their aiders and abettors darted a wild-looking man from the road, with a stick in his hand, laying about him right and left, and laughing loudly as he knocked one of the lookers-out down, and broke the shins of the second gamekeeper, who instantly began hopping on one leg in convulsions of pain.

"Ha, ha, you devils!" he cried, "you're at your old work; but I'll soon settle you," and he whirled the tremendous truncheon that he carried round and round, driving the affrighted keepers before him.

"It's Trollop, the madman—it's Trollop, the madman!" cried one.

"Keep out of his way," shouted another; "he'll knock your brains out—he's as strong as an elephant."

"Run, hang it! run," cried another; "he'll play the devil with ye—he broke Harry Smith's leg!" and away they scampered before the madman, taking the way not towards Outrun Castle, but towards the house of Mr. Longshanks, with a view of cutting off Laura's retreat, and gathering together at the distance of two or three hundred yards when they saw that they were not

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Tom Hamilton to the rescue

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"I am up to giving you a hearty good thrashing, my friend," replied Tom Hamilton, with his blood really and truly boiling, "if you don't take yourself off in a minute. You are libelling Lord Outrun: he never told you to treat a lady ill, I'm sure."

"He told us to bring her to the castle, anyhow," replied the man; "and we'll do it, by —."

"Let me get at him, let me get at him," cried the other gamekeeper, rising from the ground, and rushing at Laura's deliverer with all the fury of his fall fresh upon him.

But we have hinted already that Thomas Hamilton, Esq. was skilful of fence and all other manly exercises, and before the gamekeeper could touch him, he had made his fist intimately acquainted with the man's right eye, causing him to perform exactly the same gambol on the ground which he had previously executed.

"On my life and soul, this is too bad," cried the other gamekeeper; "we shall be obliged to lick ye, Mr. Hamilton."

"Lick me?" cried Tom Hamilton, making a feint at the man's nose with his right hand, and almost at the same moment striking him a blow on the jaw with the left, which sent him reeling amongst his companions; "you have mistaken your man, you scoundrels—keep behind me, young lady, and they shall not touch you;—stand off, or by heaven, I'll give the first one that comes near something that sha'n't quit him till his dying day."

"Make a rush upon him—make a rush upon him!" cried one of the gamekeepers. "Stand round, and make a rush upon him."

This proposal was likely to be executed with fatal effect, the ring being formed, and Laura and her defender completely encircled; when in amongst the gamekeepers and their aiders and abettors darted a wild-looking man from the road, with a stick in his hand, laying about him right and left, and laughing loudly as he knocked one of the lookers-out down, and broke the shins of the second gamekeeper, who instantly began hopping on one leg in convulsions of pain.

"Ha, ha, you devils!" he cried, "you're at your old work; but I'll soon settle you," and he whirled the tremendous truncheon that he carried round and round, driving the affrighted keepers before him:

"It's Trollop, the madman—it's Trollop, the madman!" cried one.

"Keep out of his way," shouted another; "he'll knock your brains out—he's as strong as an elephant."

"Run, hang it! run," cried another; "he'll play the devil with ye—he broke Harry Smith's leg!" and away they scampered before the madman, taking the way not towards Outrun Castle, but towards the house of Mr. Longshanks, with a view of cutting off Laura's retreat, and gathering together at the distance of two or three hundred yards when they saw that they were not pursued.



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Illustration of a man and woman in a wooded area.



Laura and her companion, however, were nearly as much embarrassed by the presence of their new-found friend as the gamekeepers had been: for the young lady had enjoyed fully as much of his society as she liked upon a former occasion; and Tom Hamilton, though as bold as a lion with all ordinary mortals, had that sort of apprehension and dislike to dealing with madmen which is experienced by many very courageous persons.

"Ah, you pretty creature!" cried the man, coming up to her, and gazing into her face with a curious, inquisitive sort of expression, "so you are as false and fickle as all the rest of them; and you ran away from me when I went to get you some water-cresses: that was very wicked of you."

"I wished to get back to my father as fast as I could," replied Laura, timidly; "I knew he must be dreadfully anxious about me."

"To get back to your father!" said the man. Ay, that was right—that was right; all girls should go back to their father, for fathers always go mad when they don't; I went mad when my Lizzy went away, but I am quite right now—quite right now; the people took my brains out in the prison, and washed them, so I'm quite right now. But that's not your father," he continued, glaring upon Tom Hamilton.

"No," said Tom Hamilton, in a very respectful tone; "but I have come to take the young lady to her father. If you are Miss Longmore, madam," he continued, "I heard last night that your father was at Rotundity Court, not many miles distant, and the best thing for you will be to go there at once."

"You have behaved so kindly, sir," said Laura, in a timid tone, "that I think I may trust you."

"No, no, no, no!" cried the madman. "Don't trust him—don't trust any man; no woman should ever trust a man, or any man a woman; they were made by God to cheat one another. Ha, ha, ha! but I've a plan for it: trust to two men—that isn't trusting a man, you know—trust to two women, and one will prevent the other from hurting you."

"'Pon my life, that's not a bad plan," said Tom Hamilton.

"No, is it?" cried the madman, with a look of strange conceited satisfaction. "Oh, I'm cunning—devilish cunning! they say I'm mad, but I'm as cunning as a she-cat whose kittens have once been drowned. Come, let us sit down, and we'll tell stories."

"Oh, no," cried Laura; "you said yourself that I ought to go to my father."

"So I did—so I did," cried the madman; "and you shall go to him too. We'll take you. Then, if he doesn't lead you right, I'll knock his brains out."

Tom Hamilton did not particularly like the prospective punishment to which the worthy madman threatened to subject him, and he consequently determined to keep a watchful eye upon all his proceedings, in order to defend himself to the best of his ability if he should be attacked.

"I must get you into a chaise," he said to Laura in a low voice, "at the first inn we come to, and then, when you are safe on your way, I

can deal with this poor fellow more easily. We had better come across here, I think," he continued aloud; "don't you think so, my good friend?"

"Any way—any way," replied the madman: "it all leads to the same end—death, death, death! that's the end of all things—that way as well as another."

"Keep a watch upon those men," continued Tom Hamilton, very willing to divert his companion's attention from himself; "they may surround us as we pass over the moor;" and giving his arm to Laura, he led her on, while the poor maniac replied—

"I'll watch them—I'll watch them: night or day it's the same to me, for I can see as well in the night as the day. Go on; they sha'n't come near you."

Tom Hamilton did go on, taking his way across the often-mentioned moor, and turning his eye from time to time upon the gamekeepers, who very soon began a series of manœuvres for intercepting Laura and her party, and taking them at a disadvantage. They appeared indeed now to have recovered some portion of courage—a virtue which had strangely disappeared upon the first attack of the madman; and as Tom bent his steps in the first instance towards the village of Outrun, they formed upon some broken ground through which the road ran, ready to rush in upon their opponents as they passed.

Cut off from his line of advance, Tom Hamilton next turned his thoughts towards the house of Mr. Longshanks, which he knew well; but having the eye of a tactician, he perceived that the enemy had taken up such a position that by a flank movement they could cut him off there also. Nothing remained, then, but to make for the solitary cottage of Nelly Bain, and passing through her house, or by her garden, to descend into the village of which Mr. Longshanks was the pride, by the other end. The cottage he knew he could certainly reach before their opponents could overtake them; and he calculated, if they persisted in their pursuit when they saw human habitations before them, which was not likely, that he could stand a siege in Nelly Bain's cottage itself till some one came to his relief.

Full of the greatness of their lord, however—for there are certain people who retain old feudal notions sufficiently to fancy that a lord's name, like the king's, is a tower of strength—the gamekeepers pursued as fast as possible, with no other fear or hesitation than those which the club of the madman and the fists of Tom Hamilton inspired. Rapidly both parties neared the cottage, the pursuers gaining upon the pursued, for Laura's steps were wavering with terror, anxiety, and agitation, till at length our friend Tom perceived that he must absolutely take up with Nelly's cottage as a citadel; and hurrying Laura through the little garden, he opened the door and beckoned to the poor madman to come in. Instead of doing so, however, the unhappy man, finding himself hard pressed, turned and rushed upon those who followed. Two of them were knocked down in a moment, one having his arm broken; but the other three threw themselves upon the madman, and after a violent struggle overpowered him and tied his hands with a cravat.

Tom Hamilton could not help leaving the prisoner in the hands of the enemy unless he risked the safety of Laura; and locking tight the door of the house, he proceeded to the back entrance and secured it in the same manner, calling aloud—"Goody—Mrs. what's your name—Holles, is there nobody here?" but receiving no answer.

He then came back to the little lattice-window, and looked out to see what the enemy were about; but they were still busy with their prisoner and their wounded companion, and Tom turned to look at Laura, who had sunk down exhausted in a chair.

Our fair friend, to say the truth, instantly felt a little awkward at being shut up and locked into a cottage with nobody but a rather good-looking, youngish man, with black whiskers and hair, and a somewhat gaily cut coat; and to say the truth, Tom Hamilton felt a little awkward likewise. Every impulse of temperament, every suggestion of habit, taught him to make love to his pretty companion without more ado. But Tom was a gentleman by nature, and he felt that it would be uncourteous to take any advantage whatsoever of a lady's unprotected situation. Struggling against, then, and overcoming his first inclination, he said in a quiet respectful tone—

"Make yourself quite easy, Miss Longmore, they cannot break in here; and as soon as they are gone, I will conduct you any where you like, in whatsoever manner you may think best."

Laura expressed her thanks in a few quiet words, and Tom again turned to the window, when to his surprise he beheld the whole party of gamekeepers moving off very rapidly in the direction of Outrun Castle. Nothing on earth did there seem which should occasion a precipitate retreat, unless it were the form of a stout ill-looking fellow approaching Nelly Bain's cottage through the road from the right; but as that road was cut deep under the bank, Tom Hamilton did not understand how the gamekeepers could see him. They had seen something else, however, which neither Mr. Hamilton nor the worthy gentleman who was approaching perceived for a minute or two after, and therefore the man with the stout, short legs and rough, warty countenance came nearer and nearer to the cottage, till Tom exclaimed—

"On my life, it's that poaching vagabond Small dram!"

"At that moment either the words which he uttered—and which, the window being open, and he speaking aloud, issued forth into the open air—or the sight of three men who came in view just then, walking slowly and talking as they went, from the village below, induced the worthy Mr. Small dram to skulk away under the hedge of Nelly Bain's garden, and pursue the least exposed paths over the moor in the direction of Market Greenford.

Scarcely was he out of sight—and it did not take two minutes to render him so—ere the men came up, one of them bearing a painted stick in his hand, in sign of constableness; and, looking round quietly as if they were admiring the prospect, they said to each other—"He's not here, you see!"

"The boy lied, I suppose; all boys do."

"Why he's had plenty of time to get off."

"Who are you looking for?" cried Tom Hamilton from the window.

"Oh, good morning, Mr. Hamilton," said the constable; "we're arter Smalldram, the tinman, for murder."

"Well he's this minute gone across the moor," said Tom Hamilton, towards Market Greenford—if you run you're sure to catch him, or drive him upon the high-road."

"Oh, that we will, that we will," said the man with the staff. "Spread out, and after him, my men."

"Oh, let us go with them, let us go with them," cried Laura: "Market Greenford is close to our house."

"It's nearly three miles off," said Tom Hamilton doubtingly.

"Oh, I can go, I can go," cried Laura, as if the very name of the place inspired her with strength.

"Very well," said Tom Hamilton, unbolting the door; "take my arm, Miss Longmore, and let us follow the path that man Smalldram took—those men are too much to the left."

Laura was quite ready to go any way he liked, so that it led to Market Greenford; and when they had gone about a hundred yards, or a little more, Tom Hamilton stopped suddenly, stooped down and picked up something. Laura imagined that he had dropped his gloves, but whatever it was, whether glove, or pocket handkerchief, or tooth-pick case, or a bundle of fish-hooks, he put it safely into his pocket, and they proceeded on their way.

Now what were the other adventures they met with, and whether there were any other adventures at all, the reader shall know hereafter, if he will take the trouble of going on a few chapters farther, the end and object of the present chapter being to show how Mr. Smalldram chanced to run his head against Joey Pike, in the way we have before described.

CHAPTER LXIII.

HOW LAURA'S HOPES RESTED UPON HER FATHER'S ADHESIVE QUALITIES—HOW SHE AND HER COMPANION WERE REJOINED BY THE MADMAN—AN ACCIDENT PROVED TO LAURA SOME MORE OF THE EVILS OF GETTING ON TOO FAST—HOW HER HISTORY GOT TO ITS LAST STAGE, AND THE HOPES OF HER FATHER WERE OVERTURNED.

PRETTY little Laura Longmore walked on by the side of Thomas Hamilton, Esq., with no very steady and vigorous pace, for, to say the truth, her neat little ankle was somewhat tired, and her whole frame exhausted with a life of anxiety such as she had never led before in her days. Nevertheless, she was very joyous; the idea of getting to Market Greenford was excessively pleasant to her, for she thought of meeting with her father; and she thought a little, too, of meeting Harry Worrel, if the truth must be told; for, from a long knowledge of her worthy parent's character, she little doubted that she would find him and Worrel together. He had lost his instruments; his observatory was gone; his great telescope was but a heap of ashes and a shapeless lump of flint glass; his sky-plunger was no longer in existence; the sun had set upon his quadrants and sextants for ever; his fulminating powders had all exploded; his pneumatic apparatus had gone to the wind; all his hydraulical contrivances had failed in putting the fire out; and his famous self-acting-electro-magnetic-perpetuo-motival machine had burnt the house down, leaving nothing unconsumed but the chevalier's trunk, a few rats and cats' bones, and a large lump of plume-allum, which he had bought some time before for the express purpose of twisting himself a fire-proof rope to escape out of window in case of need. Strange as it may seem, the recollection of all these several losses was to Laura's mind very consolatory at that moment, and the secret of it was, dearly beloved, that she knew her father must cling to something. If chemistry was denied him, he stuck to the stars; if an envious cloud shut the stars from his sight, he would apply himself to the electrical machine; if an unfortunate cat broke the plates, he would take refuge in an air-pump; and, now that all these things were utterly out of his reach, and her society, too, was denied him, she was quite sure that he would cling to Harry Worrel as the thing which he was most accustomed to, near at hand.

It might not have been very pleasant indeed for our friend Tom Hamilton to know that pretty Laura Longmore, all the time he was walking along beside her, and saying a great number of sweet and gallant things, was thinking of another man. But Laura took especial care not to tell him so, and at the end of the first mile he received the most convincing proof possible that his conversation must be very agreeable, by the young lady asking him not to walk quite so fast,

the truth being, as we have before said, that she was very tired. Scarcely, however, were the words out of her mouth, when Laura and Tom Hamilton had cause to quicken rather than slacken their pace, by the sudden apparition of the unfortunate madman coming bounding over the moor, freed from all restraint, apparently not pursued, and presenting itself to the eyes of both at the same moment. It was in vain, however, that they hoped to escape his attention: in an instant he was by their side with a loud laugh, exclaiming—

“Ha, ha, they thought they had caught me, but they’re mistaken. I’ve come to take care of you, I’ve come to take care of you. You will be quite safe now.”

Laura did not seem to be so well assured of the fact as the madman seemed to be; and Tom Hamilton was casting about in his mind how to get rid of him, when, just as they approached the high road running across the common, and leading to Market Greenford and London, the sound of wheels was heard upon it, and up dashed the identical stage coach which had whirled away Joey Pike in his hour of dire necessity. The horses’ heads were turned towards Market Greenford; there was nobody on the outside of the coach; there was only one elderly lady in. Tom thought it would be an excellent opportunity, and, calling to the coachman, he whispered to Laura—

“This is the luckiest thing in the world. You will now reach Market Greenford without fatigue, and we shall get rid of our unpleasant friend here. Coachman, will you take this young lady to Market Greenford?”

“Lord, miss!” cried the coachman, pulling up, descending from his box, and recognising Laura—having stopped many a time at the gates of Ivy Hall to drive Mr. Longmore up to a scientific exhibition to London. “Lord, miss! is that you? Well, I am werry glad to see you. Drive ye to Market Greenford?—won’t I? That I will, and werry happy of the honour. You’ll jump up on the box, I ’spose, Mr. Hamilton; I got a thin load you see;” and putting the reins down upon the foot board, with the whip across them—for he was a cadless coachman, and the unguarded moments of the coach were all along the road—he approached with a great degree of suavity and courtesy to open the door and give Laura admission.

Tom Hamilton, with equal gallantry, handed her in, saying—

“I’ll see you safe, and then go back for my horse, which is still upon the moor.”

But, alack-and-a-well-a-day! how people do reckon without their host. The coachman banged the door to, and turned with Tom Hamilton to remount his box. Both started, however, as if they had seen a spectre, for there sat the madman with the reins in his left hand, and the whip in his right, looking as sedate as a judge, and fully fancying that he was promoted to the high and important situation of stage coachman.

“All’s right!” cried poor Trollop, as he heard the door bang, and at the same moment he levelled a most tremendous cut at the ears of the leaders.

Away they started; another lash was applied to the flanks of the wheelers, and off they went at score. The wheels flew round like lightning, the horses took twenty feet at a stretch, crack, crack, crack, went the whip as loud as it could go, Tom Hamilton and the coachman ran as hard as they could.

"Hurra!" cried the madman, excited to the highest pitch of delight at the rapidity with which he was going.

"Stop, stop, stop!" shouted the pursuers, their wind waxing less a every call, and their voices fainter.

"Dash my buttons," cried the coachman, "he'll upset her."

But no such thing. Trollop had handled the reins more than once in his day; and onward they went, like thunder and lightning, without the slightest pause, till they entered the town of Market Greenford. There the horses, knowing their stable, proposed to themselves to stop, an error in judgment which was instantly corrected by repeated applications of the lash; and on they went, through the town, over the geese, amongst the pigs, on, on upon the road as hard as they could go.

"Why, my eye, what do you call that?" exclaimed the ostler at the inn door.

"There's a go!" said the helper.

"Wy, Mr. Dixon must be mad," said the landlady.

"Bless you, marm, that's not Mr. Dixon," said the chambermaid.

"That's mad Trollop, as were postman at Outrun."

"Were ever such a thing seen?" cried the landlady. "Quick, Bill, get upon the mare and gallop arter them—there will be mischief done."

"There were nobody outside, and I didn't see nobody in," said the ostler, while he got up on the outside of a horse and rode after the stage. But if he rode fast, Trollop drove faster. As a tin kettle at a dog's tail seems to impress it with the necessity of locomotion, so the light coach at the heels of the horses appeared but to accelerate their pace.

"I say, has the coach passed?" cried Bill to every turnpike man.

"That she have," answered the gentry addressed—"my eye, at sitch a rate!"

"Why, there's mad Trollop on the box," cried another. "How did all this happen, Bill?"

"I don't know," replied Bill, "but I must catch 'um;" and on he galloped too.

But for fifteen good miles he galloped in vain, till at length he espied a great black substance lying in the middle of the road.

"That's she for a thousand!" he cried, as he came up; and if the lady he referred to was the stage coach, he was certainly right; for there it did lie flat upon its side, containing within itself Laura, very much frightened and unhurt, and the demure, elderly lady, with a dislocated wrist. The horses were, where many other horses occasionally are in other places, "no where;" and as for poor Trollop, he was "no where" also.

CHAPTER LXIV.

A BLACK-HOLE ESCAPE—ASSASSINATION TABLES PROPOSED—MR. SMALLDRAM THROWS OFF HIS GUARD—A DUEL INTERRUPTED—THE CHEVALIER AND MR. TRIPE COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING.

"A BEAUTIFUL evening this, Mr. Small dram," said Mr. Jeremiah Tripe, as the excellent tinman was pushed neck and shoulders into the black-hole of Market Greenford, with very unpleasant armlets and anklets upon him. "You seemed dressed for a party, Mr. Small dram.—I say, Consty, the noggin's out—couldn't you favour one with a ditto? you'll find something in the bottom of the measure."

"Any thing to oblige ye, Mr. Tripe," replied the constable, shaking the small pewter pot, and hearing distinctly a half-crown sound in the bottom. "Will ye have hot water or cold?"

"Oh, hot, hot, hot," said Jerry; "there's cold work enough in this world, Consty, without drinking cold spirits. I love a warm-hearted tankard as well as a warm-hearted man. Why, Mr. Small dram, you're very silent! I hope you don't dislike the lodging?"

"Why, yes, I do," replied Mr. Small dram; "I'd rather they had sent me to the stone pitcher at once; but the fools were afraid."

"Indeed," said Mr. Tripe, "you must be an extraordinary preparation—what the French call an infernal machine, I take it, Mr. Small dram, if they think you're likely to blow up the gaol."

"No, it ain't that, anyhow," said Small dram; "but they were afraid to trust me and Mother Scap in the same chay together, for fear I should knock her brains out, and there was but one in the village; so they sent me here, a nasty stinking hole—I knew it well when I was in for poaching."

"Well, my good friend," replied Jerry, "we must make the best of this life. - Philosophy's a fine thing, Master Small dram. Little accidents of this kind will happen to the best-disposed young men in your line, and occasionally graver events, which, I trust, will not in your case interrupt the even tenor of your life."

"I don't know what you mean," said Small dram; "cuss philosophy! I know nothing about philosophy—how the devil should I? But I'll tell you what, Master Jerry—hang me if I don't blow that nasty old woman to the devil, for she was just the first to turn round upon me."

"That is quite a feminine offence," said Jerry Tripe; "never trust a woman, Mr. Small dram. But what you say raises my curiosity. So our friend Madame Scapulaire, as Joey calls her, is sent off to prison; suspected, I suppose, of having a little assisted the operations of nature in removing her dear departed husband from this sublunary sphere to a better state."

"Yes, that's just it," replied Small dram, "only the matter's well

nigh proved agen her—she did for him, that's clear enough—I wish it warn't, for that matter."

"Ah, you have a tender heart," said Jerry Tripe, "you compassionate the sorrows of the fair sect."

"No, I don't," replied Mr. Smalldram, gruffly. "I'd see 'em all d——d for that matter; but if it warn't so well proved agen her, I'd have a better chance of turning stag."

"Oh, fie!" cried Jerry Tripe; "die game, friend Smalldram, die game."

"I don't want to die at all, d——me," said Mr. Smalldram; "it's a shame to be hung for such a trull as that."

"Why our laws are very unjust altogether," replied Jerry Tripe in a moralizing tone. "Thank ye, Mr. Constable, I'll do as much for you another time. Shall I make you a glass of half and half, Mr. Smalldram? Those muffetees must keep your hands very cold — But as I was saying, our laws are very unjust; they make no distinctions. If you hang a man of forty for killing a man of seventy, it's not fair, for you take twice as much life as he took. Now, supposing, just for an illustration, that it was you who strangled old Scapulary—probably you did not take above two or three days' life from him—and when compared with murdering a man of five or six and twenty, who might reckon upon forty or fifty years, it was but a petty larceny sort of assassination after all."

"Nor more it were," said Mr. Smalldram.

"Don't you think," said Jerry Tripe, in the same philosophical tone, "that the equitable plan would be to take the government annuity table, and calculate the quantity of hanging a man ought to have, according to the age of the man he murdered?"

"I think you're making a fool on me," said the tinman; "and you'd better let that alone, I can tell ye."

"Not at all, not at all," said Mr. Tripe, "I am speaking of the mere equity of the case; though men are hung by law not by equity—and I am afraid they will not consider how much of old Scapulary's wind you stopped, but only whether you stopped it at all."

"Well, don't let us have no more of that," said Mr. Smalldram; "I'm sick to death of hearing of that old varmint. I don't see there was more harm in killing him than a mole or a rabbit."

"That depends upon circumstances," said Jerry Tripe, deliberately; "but I should like to know very much, Mr. Smalldram, whether amongst the papers of the deceased, as the lawyers have it, you found a certain leaf of a register, which it was shrewdly suspected the old gentleman tore out of the parish book some three-and-twenty years ago. I don't suppose the old man would destroy such a precious document."

"I dare say not," replied Mr. Smalldram, drily.

"Did you find it?" said Mr. Tripe, in an insinuating tone.

"I sees what you're up to well enough," replied Mr. Smalldram; "but it's no go, Mr. Tripe."

"You are facetious, my dear friend," said Mr. Tripe. "I only

thought that if you had—as the paper is of much importance to some people, very well with the magistrates—you might make a good bargain of it, as to turning approver.”

Mr. Small dram slapped his thigh, with a tremendous oath, exclaiming—

“And that’s the very thing I’ve throwed away, for fear they should find any of the old man’s papers upon me. What a fool I must be! Why, I could have hid it in any rabbit hole.”

“Very unfortunate, indeed,” said Mr. Tripe gravely; “and I agree fully with your own view of yourself.”

“Come, don’t give me any of your gammon,” said the tinman, in an angry tone, “or I’ll dash that fat head of yours against the wall. If I’m a fool, it’s no business of yours.”

“I beg your pardon,” said Jerry Tripe, “it is my business, Master Small dram; and as to dashing my head against the wall, it’s not in your skin to do it.”

“I’ll soon show you that,” cried Mr. Small dram, starting up. But Jerry, being more accustomed to the atmosphere of the place than himself, and perceiving a disposition on the part of Mr. Small dram to practise the monomachia with him, with a dexterous flirt of his right hand sent the gin which remained in the measure right into the tinman’s eyes, which were opened wide for the purpose of seeing him.

The pain was excessive, and Mr. Small dram swore and roared.

“Raw spirits are not good for the health,” said Jerry, and he sent the boiling water after the gin, which, as the reader may suppose from the mode, state, or condition of the element, did not tend to cool Mr. Small dram.

A fearful combat was now about to engage, for Small dram was a strong man, and Jerry Tripe not a weak one. Jerry was incumbered with fat and Small dram with iron; but Jerry certainly had the advantage of two pewter pots, which he grasped vigorously in either hand, after having discharged his missiles. Unhappily however for the reader, who might have been entertained and edified by the description of a combat such as has not been given since the days of Homer or Don Quixotte, the constable at that moment opened the door, saying in his usual gruff tone—

“Come along, Tom, here’s the chay ready for ye.”

Before Mr. Small dram issued forth in obedience to his summons, rejoicing to exchange the black-hole for the gaol, or rather as he was issuing forth, he took the opportunity of avenging himself upon Jerry Tripe, by a straight-forward kick in the stomach, which for a moment deprived the respectable butler of all breath and bodily powers. Recovering himself, however, the instant after, he darted towards Mr. Small dram just as he was ascending the steps, and hit him a blow upon the back of the neck, just below the cerebellum, which made the unfortunate gentleman dip forward and break his nose against the stones.

“Is not that too bad?” exclaimed Mr. Small dram in the tone of injured innocence. But the constable would not suffer him, as he

wished, to go back and take it out in kind, and being crammed into the chaise he was soon rolled off to prison, where we shall take leave of him, having but few words more to say of Thomas Smalldram, Esq.

Still the door of the black-hole did not shut, and Jerry having been instructed in the art of making his way in life by a great adept in that particular philosophy, had learned *to take advantage of every opening*, and judging an open door to be as good as any other, he approached the steps upon tiptoe, proposing to himself a promenade in the town of Market Greenford and the adjacent country. But just at that moment a lantern appeared at the door, for it was now nearly dark, and Jerry, judging the opportunity not favourable, withdrew from the foot of the steps, while the constable descended bearing in his hand the resplendent luminary we have mentioned, and followed by a gentleman to whom he seemed very polite.

"Here's the gemman with the long nose again, Mr. Tripe," he said; "he's your 'torney I 'spose, so I let un in. Shall I leave the lantern, sir?"

"Ay do," said the chevalier; and sitting down upon the side of the bedstead, he began as follows:—

"Although I begin to perceive, my good friend Tripe, that there is no such great difference after all between the customs and manners, the habits of thought and conditions of mind of men in this world and those in the moon, only that you are a little more extravagant and rather less reasonable than ourselves, and although I perceive that I might venture safely upon any lunatic action whatsoever—provided I did it with a grace—without attracting animadversion or fearing scandal——"

"It's a speech," said Jerry Tripe.

"Yet," continued the chevalier, uninterrupted by Jerry's observation, "I have judged it expedient for your safety to consult with you as to the measures I am to take. To-night, the magistrates wearied with many labours, and judging it too late to revisit Outrun Castle, rather soporific too with punch, somewhat indolent by nature, afflicted in some instances by gout, affected in others by rheumatism, generally differing from each other in opinion, and universally thinking each other fools—the magistrates I say——"

"It's a long speech," said Jerry Tripe.

"Have determined to do no more to-night," proceeded Mr. de Lunatico, "but to conclude with a haunch of venison which Mrs. Muggins is unfortunately possessed of, and to go on to business to-morrow. You will then be called up before them, and what I wish to know is, what will be the most convenient course for me to pursue."

"Come now," said Jerry Tripe, "that's a capital end to the speech, and very like a gentleman too. You've got nothing in life to do, my dear chevalier, but to vow you never saw me in your life before—or to say you can't swear to me, or that you won't, if you people in the moon object to telling a lie, which is just possible."

"We do," said the chevalier; "but I can easily say I won't, if they in their turn won't compel me."

"They can't, if you stick firm," said Jerry. "Just cock your head on one side, and screw up your eye, and look at me knowingly for a minute or two, and say you shouldn't like to swear. You may say I am somewhat like the man, but after all you won't take your oath of it."

"That can be done," said the chevalier; "but still, though they forgot to swear me before, I was very positive to your identity."

"Well then you can stay away altogether," said Jerry Tripe; "then when there's no evidence against me they must discharge me; at least I suppose they will. At all events, I have your promise, haven't I, chevalier, that you'll not give evidence against me?"

"You have," replied Mr. Lunatico.

"Well then now you shall hear," said Jerry Tripe; "but as I shouldn't wonder if that d——d constable were listening—just bend down your head, will ye, and I'll tell ye all about it."

The chevalier did bend down his head, and Jerry Tripe continued whispering to him for some five minutes, the chevalier repeating from time to time—"I thought so.—I could have sworn it.—Exactly so! I was sure of it all the time.—Lost it?" exclaimed the chevalier in a tone of horror and surprise.

"Yes indeed, sir," answered Jerry Tripe; "the fool threw it away; though if the noble lord, my master, had known he had got it in his hands he would have contrived to save him from the gallows if he had murdered all the old sextons in Europe—that he would."

"I think it likely," said the chevalier. "But what's to be done now?"

"Why really I don't know," replied the worthy butler; "it's an awkward job, my dear chevalier, and unless you were to advertise a reward for any one who found it, I don't see what's to be done. That's the best thing that I can suggest. But human wisdom is fallible, my dear chevalier, and even my plans are not always successful."

"No, it appears not," replied the chevalier. "Then you think I must apply to Mrs. Muggins?"

"Decidedly," said Jerry Tripe; "and if she doesn't like to speak, tell her I have, and she'll soon come to—. But after all, the register's the thing. Documentary evidence, my dear chevalier—documentary evidence for the House of Lords—nothing like it."

"Certainly not," said the chevalier; "so I'll go and order it to be cried."

CHAPTER LXV. !

THE UNDESERVED MISFORTUNES OF VISCOUNT OUTRUN—THE EULOGIUM OF GOOD NATURE—JOEY PIKE ASSERTS HIS CLAIMS—THEY ARE ADMITTED BY THE VISCOUNT—A DAY AFTER THE FAIR—HIS LORDSHIP'S MAGNANIMITY.

"THIS is portentous," said Viscount Outrun, as he stood surrounded by gamekeepers and lookers-out, and attended by the head-footman, Joseph, supplying the place of Jeremiah Tripe. "By jingo, the game's going against me! The girl got away after capture! Tom Hamilton thrashing the gamekeepers! 'Tim's arm broken! The madman escaped! and a search-warrant against Outrun Castle! 'Pon my life, these are what one may call undeserved misfortunes. But I'll resist fate itself. I'll—I'll—by jingo, I'll do something great! I'll be present at the marriage ceremony; I'll cuff Freddy at the altar till he can't stand; I'll break the parson's head with the prayer-book; and I'll horsewhip the bride."

"Lord! no, my lord," said Joseph, who had that peculiar virtue, ever underrated, often blamed, which is too frequently used as a term of reproach, and never held up to admiration for all the good it does in the world—good nature—the nearest approach to Christian charity—the most serviceable quality to others if not to one's-self—the cloak that hides a neighbour's shame, the staff that props a friend's footsteps, the balm that cures the bitter wounds of anger, the elixir that supports under many a storm and tempest, the grand self-denying ordinance of the heart, more common to great men than one knows, and always denied to the petty, the mean, and the selfish;—beautiful good nature! the smoother of the rough things of life.

"Lord! no, my lord, you won't do no such a thing. What should your lordship spoil their fun for? All your lordship wants is grandchildren, and I dare say you'll have plenty on 'em. What signifies it to you who's their mother, so they're honestly come by?"

"Joseph," said the peer—"Joseph, you are a philosopher; Joseph, you are the greatest philosopher I ever met with. My anger has departed: but still I will go to the marriage, and, for the sake of my own dignity, I will reprove my son for his clandestine proceedings. As to Tom Hamilton, woe be to him for thrashing my gamekeepers. I'll punish him—I'll punish him: let me see how I'll punish him?"

"Your lordship will make him drink a gallon of claret," said Joseph; "that's how you will punish him. As for thrashing him, my lord, I don't suppose you'll undertake that."

"Why not, Joseph, why not?" cried the peer, a slight blush suffusing his countenance, of a peculiar colour, like a glass of port wine spilt upon a pompadour silk dress. "I have thrashed as good men as Tom Hamilton in my day."

"Ay, my lord, but that was a long time ago," said Joseph, his eyes

resting respectfully upon the protuberance which his lordship carried under his waistcoat. "Mr. Hamilton is a young gentleman, my lord; and I must say it, though perhaps I shouldn't, he's as kind-hearted a young gentleman as any in the country. Then you can't take him aback for nothing: he can do every thing, I believe. He's the best shot in the four parishes; he talks the fish out of the water, I think, for they come just for his asking; he can draw a cork with his finger and thumb as well as Jerry with a corkscrew; and——"

"Drink it as well as any one," said the peer, "when he has drawn it. By jingo, he's a devilish good fellow, and worth his victuals any how."

"I'll give him a devilish good thrashing, if I catch him," said the principal gamekeeper; "he's lamed me for life, I think."

"Then you had better not try it again," rejoined the peer. "If you tell me that you will thrash him again, I'll discharge you."

"Well, my lord, I won't if you dislike it," said the man.

"I don't dislike it all," said Viscount Outrun, who seemed to be in a captious mood; "but if you thrash him *now*, I'll discharge you for not thrashing him *before*. You can't say, you could not as well do it on my account as on your own, when you had half-a-dozen men to help you; so let's have no more bragging. I'll go to the wedding, notwithstanding, Joseph; and after I have rowed them, I'll bring them home and give them a dinner. By jingo, we'll have a flare-up! They must be married at the parish church, mustn't they?—but I know they must, so I'll nab them. I wonder who the deuce he's going to take: I hope she's a pretty girl, that's all."

"Oh! trust him for that, my lord," said Joseph: "he never would look upon an ugly one in his life."

"Ay, Joseph," said the peer, "but I have often seen that those who have played the mischief with all the pretty women in the parish, and have broken the hearts of all the kind ones, have been caught by an ugly vixen at last. Where's that great he-bear he brought with him—Mr. Darius, as he calls him?"

"Oh, they're both together, my lord," said Joseph; "they seem both birds of a feather. Mr. Winterton is out in the park, ranting about and spouting verses, till he made all the deer start away to the other side, as if there had been a pack of hounds arter them ——"

"Hunting in couples," said the peer, "hunting in couples: no bad simile for Mr. Winterton's rhymes. Go and send him in here. I'll make him drunk with brandy punch: nothing like seeing an author drunk, they are so devilish conceited, and then it all comes out. By jingo, one must keep one's-self alive in this dull place! One gets thinking of all manner of things if one does not."

The peer kept his word: he did make Mr. Winterton drunk—ay, and very drunk too, while he himself, with a better fortified head, resisted the wine and the punch together, like Frederick the Great in the presence of two hostile armies; and, oh, ye gods! what a farrago of trash and absurdity poured forth from the lips of the poor poet in his state of inebriety! He talked as much nonsense as ——; he spoke as much covert treason as ——; he quoted as much bad

Latin and Greek as ———; and he misstated as many facts and principles as ———.”

There are four blanks for you! Fill them up with whatever names you like, reader! Every man has some friend or relation, in or out of parliament, to put into such places when they are vacant, and we are happy to leave the distribution of some patronage to our excellent friends and supporters.

Mr. Winterton was carried off to bed in a state between madness and stupidity which can only be acquired by drunkenness; and the peer retired to rest, having accomplished the grand and important object of *killing another evening*.

At his usual hour of rising on the following morning, Viscount Outrun rang his bell, dressed himself with great punctuality, put on a clean white waistcoat, put a red velvet nightcap into his pocket, and, after having breakfasted with a sufficient degree of appetite, proceeded towards the church, taking the path which the reader has so often travelled to and from Outrun Castle to the stile near Widow Scapulary's. Scarcely, however, had he got two hundred yards from Outrun Castle, when he beheld advancing towards him a youth dressed in a green velvet waistcoat, a blue coat, with fancy brass buttons, and trousers of a somewhat brilliant claret colour. He had one of the smartest hats that the village of Outrun could produce, set delicately upon one side of his head, with a profusion of elegantly-disposed hair escaping from under its brim. Upon the tips of his toes, with his right hand thrust into the bosom of his waistcoat, and a sweet simper upon his lips, he advanced straight to the viscount, and, to the horror and astonishment of that nobleman, fell upon his knees before him, catching his hand at the same time, and kissing it tenderly and respectfully.

“Why, who the devil are you?” cried his lordship. “By jingo, I recollect your face—why, why, it's Joey Pike! Get up, man, get up.”

“Ah, *Zio mio*,” cried Joey, still detaining the viscount's hand; “listen to the calls of nature, think upon the tender ties of blood: as Apollo said to Jupiter—‘Have you no bowels for your own relations?’”

“The fellow's mad,” said the peer. “Get up, you Tom-o'-Bedlam, or I'll kick ye. D'ye think I am to be kept here all day?”

“'Tis not the first time, O uncle!” replied Joey, “that your avuncular foot has been applied to my posterior parts; but then, not knowing and understanding that it was but kindred *chatiment*, I resented the indignity.”

“Uncle! you fool,” cried the peer, stamping, “who made me your uncle? Not your father and mother, I am sure!”

“You know it not, you know it not, it is true,” said Joey Pike; “but, nevertheless, oh, my uncle! the fact will not bear contradiction. Your blood flows *dans mes veins*, and beats in *il mio cor*. It has been a secret, studiously concealed, perhaps, from yourself, as it has been from me; but, depend upon it, it is *la verité*.”

The viscount put his finger under his hat, and scratched his head, gazing upon Joey Pike with a bewildered air, and making no reply.

But still more astonished and astounded became his look when Joey thus went on—

“Did not your sister—did not your fair, your lovely, your interesting sister—did she not contract a private marriage, being then under age? Did you not cause the leaf to be torn out of the marriage register, while her husband, thinking the marriage was concealed, was fighting by the side of the Archduke Ferdinand in the Low Countries? Was she not delivered of a child while you were absent in London? Lo! the offspring of that ill-starred union kneeling humbly at your feet, and beseeching you to acknowledge the claims of *sang!*”

If theameleon changes to many colours, the viscount's face changed to more: if the evening sky assumes every shade of red, from the deepest crimson down to a slightly-tinged grey, the face of the viscount beat it hollow.

“By jingo, this is strange,” he exclaimed, as soon as he could recover his breath. “I always thought that you were a little iniquity of old Scapulary's, especially when the fellow palmed you upon me for a foot-boy; but, by jingo, I don't know what to think now. But, pray, who told you all this story?”

“I discovered it slowly and by degrees,” replied Joey Pike: “one step led to another, till the whole became clear to me. I then put it, only last night, to Jerry Tripe—to the renowned Jerry—and he could not deny it.”

“By jingo, this is queer!” cried the peer. “On my life, I always suspected something; but Jerry should not have said any thing without asking me. Well, get up, my boy: we'll inquire into the matter; and if it be so, why, hang it! I must do something for you somehow.”

Joey embraced the viscount's knees, and wept, while his lordship, who did not like such scenes, tried vigorously to shuffle him off.

Joey was in the height of his glory; there was not one feeling or sentiment wanting to the perfection of his felicity. He was noble—he was unfortunate—he was injured—he was interesting. He could admire himself—he could compassionate himself—he could sympathise with himself—he could feel for himself. But in the meantime he held tight hold of the viscount's knees, like poor Malibran, acting Desdemona in the last scene; and, as his lordship, who disliked the thing very much, struggled vehemently to free himself, and was rather rounder in the girth than substantial in the base, as may be naturally expected, he fell on his back upon the grass, dragging Joey down with his face between his two feet. Joey instantly sprang up with a bound upon one foot, hovering over the viscount with outstretched arms, like the famous figure of Victory—then bending down, he helped his lordship up, exclaiming as he did so—“How touching, to raise one's uncle from the ground!”

“Why the devil did you throw me down?” cried the peer. “But never mind: get away to the castle—tell the people I sent you; but mind, don't give yourself airs, or they'll kick you all round the place. I'm going on to the church, where my boy Freddy is going to be



Table 1



They eat what is dead

married this morning, whether I like it or not. Damn it! clandestine marriages seem to run in my family—it is a hereditary disease.”

“May I not accompany my beloved uncle,” exclaimed Joey, “to witness the *noces* of my dear cousin?”

“Oh, come if you like, come if you like,” cried the peer. “By jingo, it’s a good thought. Here, give us your arm. I’m always a little puffy in the morning;” and away they walked towards the stile, the peer certainly deriving great assistance from the support he received, and beginning to think it no bad thing to have a nephew after all.

Over the stile they went, passed old Scapulary’s door, and through the churchyard into the porch of the church. There was a murmur within, as if somebody was reading prayers; and then a loud and nasal “amen” sounded down the aisle.

“By jingo, we’re too late,” cried the peer—“all owing to your stopping me that way, Joey. But come along, come along; I’ll give it them heartily.”

“Oh, don’t *sauter* them too severely,” cried Joey.

“Sauter!” cried the peer; “what the devil does the jackanapes mean?”

“Blow ’em up,” said Joey, “blow ’em up, my lord.”

“Oh, but I will blow ’em up,” said his lordship, striding forward up the aisle, with the rubies upon his countenance glowing and glistening like the diamonds of the fairy tales—with their own internal fire. “Holloa, Freddy!” he cried, “what are you about, you blackguard? Is this the way you return a father’s confidence?—and you, Master Hookham, what the devil did you marry them for without my leave?”

“Five guineas, my noble and very good lord,” replied the parson, closing the book, “that’s what I married them for. Ain’t that a capital motive?”

“A devilish dirty one, by jingo,” said the peer. “Didn’t I give you the living, you scoundrel?”

“Yes, you did, my lord,” replied Parson Hookham; “but I understand your lordship has got no more livings to give. Besides, I can’t refuse to perform my office when the parties are of due age and no lawful impediment.”

In the meantime the Honourable Frederick Henry Augustus Fitzurse had slunk behind Mr. Darius with a face peculiarly whity-brown, and poor Jane had taken refuge behind Tom Hamilton, while Sally, her bridesmaid, tittered, brimfull of saucy fun, not a little pleased at a taste of revenge upon the viscount.

“Next time he opens my boxes, Jane,” she said, “I hope he may find a marriage licence in them.”

But poor Jane was all in a twitter, and a great deal too much agitated with various things, to enter into Sally’s amusement. Peeping out from behind Tom Hamilton the first thing she endeavoured to ascertain was, whether her noble father-in-law had a horsewhip in his hand; and to say the truth, the Honourable Mr. Fitzurse, knowing his father’s propensities, was engaged in the same investigation at the same moment.

The next burst of the peer's indignation fell upon Tom Hamilton—

“ A pretty fellow you are, Tom—aren't you ?” he exclaimed. “ What the devil do you mean, sir, by licking my gamekeepers, and marrying my son without my consent ?”

“ I beg your lordship's pardon,” said Tom Hamilton, “ in the latter point you are mistaken. I wouldn't marry your son for all the world, even if I were a woman. But not to joke with your lordship's charge, as you ask me seriously why I licked your gamekeepers I will answer you seriously ; and I am sure my reply will be far from giving offence to your lordship. I licked your gamekeepers because I caught them in a blackguard and dishonourable act, which I knew your lordship would neither command nor justify. They were insulting a lady, my lord, and not only insulting but ill-treating her. Now I only saved your lordship the trouble of doing that which I knew you would do yourself as soon as you heard the particulars. Now as to the next point, namely, the aiding and abetting your son in committing the iniquity of matrimony——”

“ It is an honourable state !” exclaimed Dr. Hookham.

“ Ay,” cried the peer, with a laugh which showed that his anger was evaporating, “ and more honourable than pleasant as you know, Hookham—isn't it ? But come, Tom, get on with the matrimony. What's your excuse for that, old boy ? You're one of those fellows who never want a good reason for a thing. I know ye.”

“ Why, as to abetting your son, as I have said before,” replied Tom Hamilton, “ my reason for that was exactly the same as for thrashing the keepers.”

“ Why, you didn't find him insulting and ill-treating a lady ?”

“ Why, something very like it,” replied Tom Hamilton ; “ and I was quite sure if I didn't induce him to marry her, your lordship would make him, seeing that he had given her a promise to do so under his own hand.”

“ That I would then, certainly,” said the peer ; “ those are a sort of bills at sight that ought always to be honoured.”

“ The only ones, my lord, I suppose ?” said Tom.

“ Pretty nearly,” answered the peer, “ pretty nearly. But come, hang it, let us see the girl—you've got her in behind ye there, so that I can't see my own daughter-in-law.”

“ Let me present her to your lordship,” said Tom Hamilton, taking Jane's hand, who, to say the truth, in her best bonnet, and with the smartest cap that the time had permitted her to make up, looked as pretty a girl as one would wish to set eyes upon ; “ let me present her to your lordship. The Honourable Mrs. Fitzurse——Viscount Out-run,” and he led her up to the peer.

Every one was as quiet as a mouse in a cheese, for there was a strong consciousness upon all parties present that his lordship might not be particularly well satisfied with having his head housemaid for his daughter-in-law. He certainly did gaze upon her for a minute or two in silent surprise, but then to the astonishment of every body, he took her in his arms, and gave her a huge kiss.

"Pon my life, Jane," he said, "I believe Freddy might have done worse. I am not half so angry as I thought I should be; so every one of ye come home with me and I'll give you a good dinner."

"Why, Jane," said Joey Pike, "I never thought I should have you for a cousin."

"A cousin?" cried Jane.

"A cousin?" cried Mr. Fitzurse. "Why, my dear girl, your cousins are springing up like mushrooms."

"Why, a great discovery has been made," said Joey; "I'm his lordship's nephew."

"What! you, Joey Pike?" cried Tom Hamilton.

"What! you, Joey?" cried Jane.

"What! you, Joey?" cried the parson.

"What! you, Joey?—what! you, Joey?—what! you, Joey?" cried every body.

"Why, so he says," replied the viscount, taking advantage of an attitude into which Joey was twisting himself, before he began his answer; "why, so he says; and hang me if I don't believe there's some truth in it. But come along—let the bells be rang—as the thing's done, and can't be undone, we'll make the best of it. We'll broach the '89, and have a grand dinner, and have one merry day at least in this dull life."

The grand jury of fate seldom, if ever, has such a thing brought before it, without throwing out the bill.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE DARK HINTS OF TOM HAMILTON—THE AXIOMS OF MRS. MUGGINS—THE REFLECTIONS OF THE CHEVALIER—THE BRIDAL PROCESSION—THE DISCOMFUTURE OF THE MAGISTRACY—THE ELOQUENCE OF THE BEE.

"I MUST just run up to the Half Moon," said Tom Hamilton, "and tell good old Mr. Longmore, who, I understand, is there; that his daughter is safe and well at the village of Oxborough: I'll come after you directly. But first let me say that I hope your lordship is satisfied with my conduct."

"Why, Tom," said the peer, shaking him by the hand, "you are a devilish good fellow, one way or another; but I mustn't have you meddling gamekeepers any more, or marrying my son to any body without my consent."

"As to the gamekeepers, my lord," said Tom Hamilton, "they must take their chance: as to your son, this may be pretty well called a wind-up. I seldom meddle with matrimony at all, and never with bigamy; and as there's capital fishing and shooting, you know—"

"Ay, that 'ill do, that 'ill do," said the peer; "don't be long, Tom: there's a good fellow; we shall want all the fun we can get;" and, putting himself at the head of the procession, Viscount Outrun led the way from the church, with the rest of the party following.

Tom Hamilton, for his part, sped away to the sign of the Half Moon, wondering not a little to see no boys in the streets of Outrun, for it was a place abundant in that sort of weed; but, strange to say, it was totally vacant, although, according to any ordinary calculation, the news ought to have got abroad a full quarter of an hour before. Not only boys were absent, however, but girls—not only girls, but men; and, had it not been for some women and some infants, the town would have been like that admirable city in the Arabian Nights, where every body was silent (being turned into stone) but one person, who did nothing but pray—an excellent moral lesson, and a fine allegory, (as is the case with every one of those wonderful tales,) showing how the worship of any of the false deities of this world, from Mammon to Lucifer, hardens men to stone; while those only survive to real life who lift their voices and their hearts to God alone. However, all was dull and silent in the streets of Outrun; and Mr. Hamilton, on arriving at the door of the Half Moon, found it nearly as dull and silent also.

"Holloa, waiter! hoy!" he cried. "Hang it, is there no one here?"

"Lawk, Mr. Hamilton, is that you?" said Mrs. Muggins. "What do you please to want, sir?"

"I want Mr. Longmore," replied Tom Hamilton.

"Dear sir, he's not in," said Mrs. Muggins; "he's gone with the rest

of the gentlemen down to the castle. They've taken all the world with them, and sworn in everybody they can find as special constables. Never was such a piece of work."

"Is Mr. Worrel here, then?" said Tom Hamilton; "for I want to see him very much."

"Lord, no, sir," replied Mrs. Muggins; "he's gone down, too: they've all gone to search the castle for Miss Laura. Weren't you there when they all got ducked yesterday?"

"No, indeed," answered Tom Hamilton; "but I have heard something of it. There's nobody here, then?"

"Nobody at all," said Mrs. Muggins, "but the odd gentleman with the long nose, who is sitting in the back parlour, trying to pump something out of me which I say is nothing to nobody."

"Ah!" said Tom Hamilton, "is that about this murder of old Scapulary?"

"No, no," said Mrs. Muggins; "it is about a business long before your time. You might be an infant in arms, indeed, then; or maybe four or five years old, for aught I know; but you can know nothing about that affair."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Tom. "I know more about most things than you think of, Mrs. Muggins. Pray, is it about a certain Colonel Worrel?"

"Laud a mercy! how you guess," cried Mrs. Muggins, tittering. "Why, you're as bad as the chevalier himself, though he seems to see through one with a single wink of his clear grey eyes."

"Well, Mrs. Muggins," said Tom Hamilton, with a knowing look, "if the chevalier wants to know more of Colonel Worrel's history, he had better come to me. Tell him so; and now, good-by, for I must run back as fast as I can to Outrun Castle."

Thus saying, he left her; and Mrs. Muggins stood, for the space of about two minutes, with her eyes fixed upon a particular paving-stone, and then ended her contemplations with a sage axiom, saying—"When things get into a conglomeration, they are sure to expire;" which is undoubtedly true, because Mrs. Muggins said it. Otherwise, we should have considerable doubts as to the meaning of the axiom; but she went on to add another, in the truth and excellence of which we perfectly concur, though it was conveyed in more homely and less erudite language.

"When everybody runs, it's as well to be the first in the race," said Mrs. Muggins, and in she went to the chevalier, who, after five minutes' conversation with her—they might, indeed, be ten minutes that he spent in her society—came out, with his hat set jauntily on one side of his head, and took his way towards the stile leading into Outrun park.

As he passed by the cottage of old Scapulary, he paused to meditate, for the windows were closed that erst were open, the door was tight shut, and there was that air of un-inhabited-ness about it which always gives matter for the speculative mind to pause and ponder upon.

"Ay," he said, "she is gone—to the gaol and the gallows—a proper consummation for a life of vice. A bad speculation that, a bad specu-

lation. We are but traders, after all, in fate and circumstances; we barter through life one condition for another, and, in our eagerness upon the great Exchange, are always buying a pig in a poke. The merchandise we have—the things of the present—we know, with all their imperfections, their faults, and their flaws, and we stupidly try to get rid of them in change for the packed-up bales of the future, which we have never examined except by a small and fraudulent sample, held out in the hand of that roguish broker, Hope. A bad speculation, Mrs. Scapulary, a bad speculation! for of one thing we may be very certain, that whatever we may purchase, if it be bought by the forged bills or counterfeit coin of vice and crime, we shall be obliged to refund with a terrible interest, and perhaps be put into a dark, cold prison, as a punishment for the offence. How melancholy a house looks with the windows closed," continued the chevalier; "it looks as if death were upon it—the eyes shut, and the teeth set, and the spirit from within departed. When first I passed that cottage, how gay and cheerful it looked, and now it is as dull as disappointment. A bad speculation, Mrs. Scapulary, a bad speculation! It is a curious question for me to determine, and which my instructions do not decide, how far crime of any kind is, or is not lunacy. Nine times out of ten it is so, distinctly; for we find that people cast away every blessing, long, permanent, excellent, for some momentary enjoyment, or some fallacious expectation. I must think of this; for, having cleared the higher orders of society of one half of its numbers—who are our mere citizens got astray here below—I may have a general gaol delivery to go through, which will be a serious affair."

Thus saying, the chevalier walked on, crossed the stile into Outram park, and proceeding with his quick but gliding and equable step, he soon came within sight of the building.

"Ay," he said, "there they are, busily at it, and not likely, I should think, to be outwitted a second time. But, bless my soul! if I mistake not, Lord Outram himself is there upon the steps haranguing them. What can all this be about, I wonder?"

We must now proceed to explain to the reader the circumstances which caused our honourable commissioner's astonishment.

With slow and dignified steps, having the bride upon his arm, and talking to her in a gay—somewhat too gay a tone, the noble lord conducted the procession from the church-door, while the rest of the party followed; Mr. Darius paying devoted attention to the bride's-maid, in whose eyes he was a very personable man; and Mr. Fitzurse yawning languidly, and drawling intolerably through a conversation with Joey Pike. When they approached the castle, however, they perceived, to the surprise of the greater part of the persons there present, a multitude of horse and foot, grown men and infantry, surrounding the mansion, which was apparently in a state of siege or blockade.

"What's all that, my noble dad?" inquired Mr. Fitzurse: "there seems a mob about the place. 'It caen't be the garland girls, there's too many of 'em, and they're all men."

"That's no reason, Freddy," said the peer. "What was the Swiss

giantess but a whacking mountaineer? and the tall woman in the Haymarket but a life-guardsmen?"

"I was a woman once," said Joey Pike, with sweet *naïveté*.

"Perhaps you aire now, Joey," said Mr. Fitzurse; "you look demmed like one."

"*C'est un mensonge!*" cried Joey, his manhood rising against the indignity.

"But what caen they be?" said Mr. Fitzurse.

"They look like anthropophagi," said Mr. Darius. "Surely none of my New Zealand friends come down from London—I could almost fancy I heard the war song."

Mr. Fitzurse turned pale, and began to perspire.

"There's a large congregation," said Dr. Hookham.

"Larger than you ever preached to, Hookham," replied the peer, marching on steadily.

"It's like a select vestry," said the clerk.

"Not very select, I should think," said the peer, who perfectly well knew who were the personages before him. "If it wasn't a wedding-day I'd send them away by fire this time; I sent them away by water the last. The dogs have broken their word with me. Come along—come along. Walk up into the front, Mr. Darius What's-your-name; perhaps I may give you an opportunity of eating an enemy, according to your civilized customs over the water."

"My lord, I shall be delighted," said Mr. Darius, laying his hand upon his heart. "Have you got such a thing as a scalping-knife about you, Fitzurse?"

"No," cried Mr. Fitzurse, in a tremulous tone. "Hang me if that fellow's not enough to freeze one's marrow!"

"By jingo!" cried the peer, "I know how I'll settle it: I'll invite them all to dinner; and if I don't make old Longmore so drunk that he sha'n't know his pigtail from a stick of celery, never trust to my claret again."

While this interesting and instructive conversation was going on, the bridal party was gradually approaching nearer and nearer to the terrace of Outrun Castle; and as they did so, they saw surrounding the building, in not a very regular line, magistrates and constables innumerable, with the intervals between filled up by the flower of "young Outrun." The doors of the castle were closely shut, but at the windows appeared manifold servants' heads, looking out and laughing defiance at the *posse comitatus* below. The moment, however, the viscount and those who were with him appeared, half-a-dozen magistrates turned their horses' heads and rode towards him, apparently with very hostile thoughts; but the sight of white gloves and white ribands, and all the signals and symptoms of a wedding, seemed to strike them with some awe and surprise. However, they pursued their course, and as they came up each vociferated his adjuration to Viscount Outrun.

"I insist, my lord——" cried Mr. Longmore.

"Lord Outrun, I command, in the name of the law——" said Mr. Puddenstream.

"I wish your lordship would have done with this work," cried another.

"It's all no use, you must give her up at last," cried a third.

"Open the doors of the castle, my lord, *sic jubeo, sic volo*," said Mr. Rotundity, in an impressive tone.

"Sick! My good friend Rotundity," said the peer, with a funny twinkle of his eye, "you don't look sick."

"Well might your lordship laugh at them," said Mr. Longshanks, "for a pack of the greatest fools that ever oppressed a county bench, if your lordship was not a greater fool than any of them. Do you think, sir, that these pranks can last for ever; and that the favours brought disgrace upon your name, and discredit upon your house, they will not bring punishment upon your person? Sometimes we excuse in a young man faults and follies, even when they display little better than the wit of an idiot, or the conduct of a blockhead, because Christian charity is fain to hope that time will give him some small sense, and virtue awaken as passion falls asleep. But when we see an old man tottering on the brink of the grave committing the follies and wickedness that would disgrace a boy, every expectation of amendment is extinguished, and the breast finds room for nothing but reprobation."

Now, if there was a man upon the face of the earth that Lord Outrun was afraid of, it was the worthy surgeon, Mr. Longshanks. But the viscount was afraid of no man upon the face of the earth, and he therefore replied, bursting into a laugh at the worthy surgeon's oration—"Come, come, Longshanks, don't treat us to any sermons; you've not got the lancet or the pill-box in your hand now, neither are we poor lying-in women to receive a clinical lecture from the man-midwife. Gentlemen all, what is it you want? But first of all, let me introduce to you my daughter-in-law, the Honourable Mrs. Fitzurse; or, as I intend to have her called soon, Lady Fitzurse, for I find there's a barony swamped in the viscounty. Come, come, Jane, do not look sheepish—these are the magistrates of the county, Jane, who put people in the stocks—hold up your head, and make them a curtsy, like a good girl. Yes, gentlemen, you may stare—this is the Honourable Mrs. Fitzurse. And now be so good as to tell me what you want here?"

"I want my daughter Laura, sir," replied Mr. Longmore, sharply.

"We want Miss Longmore, my lord," cried the magistrates in chorus.

"Then you want what you won't get," replied the peer, "for Miss Longmore is not here. You may search every hole in the house and out of it, from the garret to the dog-kennel,—not forgetting the fire-tank,—and no Miss Longmore will you find."

"Why," cried half-a-dozen voices, "there's Joey Pike himself standing just behind your lordship. He saw her with his own eyes."

"What! Joey!" said the peer; "my nevy Joey?—he tells me he's my nevy, gentlemen, and I dare say 'its all right,' as I once heard the guard of the mail say, just as he was banging off a lady's finger with the door."

"Joey Pike his nephew!" cried all the magistrates at once, except Mr. Longshanks, who burst into a violent fit of laughter.

Joey was in no slight degree of agitation, not alone at the public announcement of his new dignity, but at the allusion to his discovery of Laura in Outrun Castle—an allusion which he thought might do him injury in the eyes of his dearly-beloved relations. He was soon relieved, however, for the peer took no farther notice of the subject, merely saying—

"Well, all I can tell you is, gentlemen, that she isn't there; and you are welcome to search the house from top to bottom, if you please, only taking care to scrape your feet before you come in."

"But shall we be safe?" cried Mr. Rotundity. "*Tutus, my lord, tutus?*"

"No more tanks," cried Mr. Puddenstream; "no more tanks, my lord?"

"You shall be quite safe, upon my honour," replied the peer, moving towards the terrace; "nay, more, you shall every one of you dine with me: and then if she is in the house, you must find her you know;" and turning round upon the steps which he had now reached, with the wedding-party arranged on either side, and the magistrates and constables in front, he stretched forth his hand and addressed them in the tone of an orator.

"Friends, magistrates, constables, boys and girls," he said, "on this auspicious day, when the heir of Outrun unites his destiny for life to the fair object of his tenderest affections, and the remote image of a long line of illustrious progeny presents itself unto my eyes, I think it becomes me to open a new era in my life, and, by a solemn act of oblivion for all former offences, to ensure to my neighbours peace and good will from me for the future. At the same time, I claim the same at their hands, and I declare that henceforth a different course shall be pursued at Outrun Castle. Drunkenness shall be abolished through the week, and only indulged in on Saturday night, when Hookham here will preach all the better for an additional bottle; and I shall fill my pew with the greater dignity of somnolence. Freddy, the married man, shall behave himself as becometh that capacity; and my friend, Tom Hamilton, now coming up, shall shoot, fish, and thrash the gamekeepers no more than is lawful. While we are occasionally visited by strangers, such as the tall gentleman on my right, or the thin, black mazzarded man now putting his head out of the window, they shall behave themselves with decorum. *Fais ce que tu voudras*, shall be no longer the motto of Outrun Castle; and we will be so sober, solemn, silent, and severe, that my good friend, Longshanks, there, shall lose half his fees; and the Methodist parson shall leave off preaching at me, as I ride past the door of the conventicle. But in the meantime, oh, dearly beloved friends, this one night shall be given up to jollity. The magistrates shall dine with me in the dining-hall—the constables shall dine in the servants'-hall—the *oi polloi* and the leetle children shall dine upon the terrace—immemorial pipes of port, and antiquated ale, which has seen many a long October, shall flow like water, till every man shall feel his sides fatter, and his nose

laughter to-morrow morning. Then we'll drink the king's health in loyal bumpers—we'll drink one and another's health with friendly conviviality—we'll make long speeches about nothing at all, till all our neighbours are tired, and begin to talk—and we'll have songs sung by voices that shall set all our teeth on edge. Every man shall clip the king's English as much as he pleases, and we'll end the evening with a hip, hip, hurra for the bride and bridegroom. Now, ladies, gentlemen, and magistrates, walk in, for we'll do all this—by jingo, we will."

Mr. de Lunatico, who had just come up, put his hand into his pocket, and pulled out a ticket, saying to himself—

"That man is too clever, so to misuse his abilities, without being insane."

Tom Hamilton, at the same moment, drew Mr. Longmore aside, and spoke to him eagerly for a moment; and Mr. Longshanks, with a cynical smile, rubbed his hands, and said—

"I'll dine with him, though I hate these junketings; but something very extraordinary must come out of this strange affair."

And the peer led the way into the castle.

CHAPTER LXVII.

HOW THE CHEVALIER AND MR. LONGMORE HEARD NEWS OF LAURA—HOW THE CHEVALIER GAVE THE GO-BY TO THE MAGISTRATES—A DISQUISITION UPON PLEAS' KNEES AND KANGAROOS' TAILS—THE SIEGE AND DEFENCE OF MISS MORTMOUTH, AND HOW HER FORTRESS WAS SUCCOURED.

Now, it is one of the best ways in the world of bringing about incidents and happy hits, points, and catastrophes in a romance, tale, story, or novel, to make Mr. A., while talking secretly to Mr. B., be overheard by Mr. C., who, though he stands so near him in the alphabet, is always Mr. B.'s inveterate enemy. This not being a romance, however, but a very true and veracious history, as the reader must long ago have perceived, no such thing can be expected to take place therein; and we venture to say, that not one of the characters ever overheard, accidentally or intentionally, the least piece of news affecting each other, in the whole course of their mutual and several lives. Accidental eaves-dropping is very nearly as bad as accidental robbery—a sort of thing that does not happen unintentionally; and the Chevalier de Lunatico, perceiving that he was somewhat nearer to Mr. Longmore and Tom Hamilton than was quite safe for their secret, drew two or three steps back, and was going to follow the viscount and the rest into the house, when Mr. Longmore, swinging round his head with a joyous wave of the pigtail, exclaimed—

"Chevalier, chevalier! here's mortal news: Laura has been over-
turned in a stage coach."

The chevalier thrust his hand into his breeches pocket, seeking for another billet to bestow upon his friend Mr. Longmore, for he thought the symptoms of the case must be decided, when the excellent philosopher could rejoice in such a catastrophe. At the same time, Tom Hamilton made a sign to Mr. Longmore not to speak so loud, and that excellent old gentleman, dropping his voice, proceeded to inform the chevalier that the cause of his satisfaction was, that he had at length ascertained his daughter's temporary abode, which was the little inn at Oxborough, not far from which the stage had been overturned by its mad driver.

"I will go and find her immediately," added Mr. Longmore; "and I'll take Harry Worrel with me."

"That is exactly what I wish to prevent," replied Tom Hamilton. "I've a word or two to say to Mr. Worrel, for which I must choose a proper moment."

"No new folly, no new folly, I hope, young man," said Mr. Longmore; "no more fighting, or you shall rue it."

"Oh no," answered Tom Hamilton, "there's no folly or fighting in it, either, unless good luck be fighting, and truth be folly."

"Truth, my dear sir," said the natural philosopher—"truth is an abstract proposition; simple, undoubted, absolute truth, such as, 'a whole is greater than a part.' It is axiomatic. Thus, I say, all right angles are equal to each other. Now, when I want to take an observation of the sun——"

"Perhaps, my dear friend," said the chevalier, "if you were to take an observation of the sun just now, you would see that he is not far from the meridian; and, as you have got to go far, and I should like to accompany you—at least part of the way—it may be as well to set out."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Mr. Longmore, bursting out into one of his old cheerful laughs—"so it may, chevalier, so it may. But one likes to instruct young people, you know; it does them good, it does them good to hear a little reason; for, as every plant wants water, so does that extraordinary plant, the human mind, require irrigation of its particular kind. But come, let us get upon our horses again. We'll have a chaise at Outrun, pay the boy well, and be back to dinner."

"Holloa, chevalier! where are you going?" cried the voice of Mr. Longshanks, as soon as the commissioner put his foot in the stirrup—"you'll be wanted in a minute. Jerry Tripe is sent for, and, if you have a mind to have him committed for the robbery, you must stay and swear that he is the man who stopped you in the lane."

"I would rather not," replied the chevalier, swinging himself into the saddle; "I should not like to swear to such a fact."

"Take care that Puddenstream don't hear you," said Mr. Longshanks; "for he would tell you in a minute that the laws of the country are not to be trifled with, and that there are such things as misprison, condonation, covin, and a thousand other strange terms, the meaning of which he knows not in the least; just as my parrot says, 'God save King Charles,' without at all knowing that one unfortunate king of that name had his head chopped off not two centuries ago, and that the other had

a head which, though not worth the chopping, might just as well have been where his father's was for all the good it ever did his people. What I mean is, chevalier, that in this country people are not allowed to swear and not swear just when they like. I think you have already taken an oath that he was the man who robbed you."

"No, no!" replied Mr. de Lunatico—"I swore I had great suspicions that he was the man; but I have had the pleasure of seeing him twice since, and I now say I will not swear to him."

"Oh ho, is it so?" said Mr. Longshanks, with a shrewd and somewhat impatient look. "I understand you, sir; and, as child's play is not fit for magistrates, I shall at once move that he be discharged as soon as he is brought up."

"That may be a good plan," replied the chevalier, calmly taking his coat-tails out from between his nether man and the saddle.

"Hark ye, chevalier," said Mr. Longshanks, approaching him; "have you really got hold of the true story? or are you, too, such an ass as to be deceived by a piece of Tom-foolery?"

"I *have* got hold of the true story," replied the chevalier, drily, "and am *not* deceived by the Tom-foolery, as you will find when I return."

"If that's the case," said Mr. Longshanks, turning abruptly into the house, "I will have every thing ready for you."

Tom Hamilton smiled grimly as he heard all this enigmatical conversation, but uttered not a word. The chevalier and Mr. Longmore nodded to him kindly, and then, putting spurs to their steeds, set out at a good pace for the great gates of the park. At the sign of the Half Moon they got into a chaise; and, just as Mrs. Muggins was curtsying them off, a boy came up from Outrun Castle, requesting that lady to give Mr. Longshanks the pleasure of her company at the mansion towards the hour of seven. The chevalier smiled as he heard the invitation, and the chaise rolled off towards Oxborough.

Grave and important was the conversation between Mr. de Lunatico and Mr. Longmore, the whole of which we would willingly detail to the reader, but that already the book is waxing, like Falstaff, thick in the girth, and we must therefore confine ourselves to the mere heads. They first began talking about starry nebulae, and then deviated into fleas. This produced a grand discussion upon the spring contrivance which enables fleas to take so extensive a scope in their hop proceedings; and then, again, an ingenious comparison was instituted between the knees of a flea's hind leg and the base of a kangaroo's tail, which ended in a decision favourable to the flea, Mr. Longmore proving, to the satisfaction of the chevalier, that whereas the kangaroo could, at the most, spring fifteen times his own length, the flea, by the best computation, could hop five hundred and forty times his own length, in a direct line—even when out of practice—which, allowing for the parabolic curve described by the flea's course, would give a much greater extent. Mr. Longmore then accurately explained to his companion the nature of a sort of seven-league boots, constructed upon the same principle as the flea's knee, which would enable a man to take at one skip, upon an average, the distance of three thousand two hundred and forty feet,

which, as he justly observed, would greatly facilitate the marching of armies.

"Do you not think," asked the chevalier, in a mild and inquiring tone, "that one might break one's legs or one's neck in coming down?"

"The boots must be provided with feather-bed soles," replied Mr. Longmore.

"I understand," said the chevalier; "shoe your troop of horse with felt."

The conversation then rambled to frogs, and thence naturally proceeded to toads; then, by an easy transition, to holes, and thence to worms. Mines came next; and, as the stars are said from the bottom of a deep pit to be visible to the human eye at midday, so did Mr. Longmore turn his thoughts, upon the pivot of internal fires, from the bottom of a coal mine to the subject of planetary motion, explaining to the chevalier all that would take place if the order of the universe were altered or suspended, even for a moment. To have heard him talk you would have supposed that he had had a finger in creation, though he did not go to quite the blasphemous lengths of a certain Spanish king, who much wished to simplify God's own handiwork.

From the stars the excellent philosopher dropped suddenly into some fishpond, and he was conversing on this interesting topic, when he paused for an instant to put his head out of the carriage, saying, "That's our friend Rotundity's place."

They were passing at the moment some neat park pailing, and as the chevalier followed his friend's example and looked out, the ears of both were astounded by a loud scream from within the enclosure. The chaise was instantly stopped, both gentlemen sprang out, the chevalier vaulted over the pailing, Mr. Longmore got upon the top, and by aid of the postillion's two hands applied to the part of his person which he most exposed in the scramble, he was pushed into the enclosure; when following in the chevalier's wake he soon came to a little green lawn, amongst the trees, whence a second or third scream had just proceeded.

The sight that presented itself, when Mr. de Lunatico entered this shady blest retreat, had something both awful and ludicrous in it; for there, in a summer-house constructed with the ribs of a Greenland whale, surmounted by the pelvis of some extinct mammalia, stood Miss Serpenteria Rotundity, with no other person than fair Laura Longmore herself behind her, and both undergoing the attack of a wild and furious-looking man, armed with a large stick.

But let it not be supposed that Miss Rotundity weakly yielded to womanly fear, for on the contrary, accustomed to contemplate the monstrous creations of remote ages, man seemed a dwarf to her expanded mind, and in comparison with her mammothian and mastodonie friends, the madman before her was no more than a snarling lap dog. Holding in one hand the tibia of a fossil elk, which formed no inconsiderable club, she protended in the other the ivory horn of an immense narwhal, as a sort of pike with which she kept the assailant at bay, giving him some tremendous pokes as he attempted to rush at her.

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Uor M

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CHAPTER LXVII.

HOW THE CHEVALIER AND MR. LONGMORE HEARD NEWS OF LAURA—HOW THE CHEVALIER GAVE THE GO-BY TO THE MAGISTRATES—A DISQUISITION UPON PLEAS' KNEES AND KANGAROO'S TAILS—THE SIEGE AND DEFENCE OF MISS ROTSWIDITZ, AND HOW HER FORTRESS WAS SUCCURED.

Now, it is one of the best ways in the world of bringing about incidents and happy hits, points, and catastrophes in a romance, tale, story, or novel, to make Mr. A, while talking secretly to Mr. B, be overheard by Mr. C, who, though he stands so near him in the alphabet, is always Mr. B's inveterate enemy. This not being a romance, however, but a very true and veracious history, as the reader must long ago have perceived, no such thing can be expected to take place therein; and we venture to say, that not one of the characters ever overheard, accidentally or intentionally, the least piece of news affecting each other, in the whole course of their mutual and several lives. Accidental eaves-dropping is very nearly as bad as accidental robbery—a sort of thing that does not happen unintentionally; and the Chevalier de Lunatico, perceiving that he was somewhat nearer to Mr. Longmore and Tom Hamilton than was quite safe for their secret, drew two or three steps back, and was going to follow the viscount and the rest into the house, when Mr. Longmore, swinging round his head with a joyous wave of the pigtail, exclaimed—

"Chevalier, chevalier! here's capital news: Laura has been overturned in a stage coach."

The chevalier thrust his hand into his breeches pocket, seeking for another billet to bestow upon his friend Mr. Longmore, for he thought the symptoms of the case must be decided, when the excellent philosopher could rejoice in such a catastrophe. At the same time, Tom Hamilton made a sign to Mr. Longmore not to speak so loud, and that excellent old gentleman, dropping his voice, proceeded to inform the chevalier that the cause of his satisfaction was, that he had at length ascertained his daughter's temporary abode, which was the little inn at Oxborough, not far from which the stage had been overturned by its mad driver.

"I will go and find her immediately," added Mr. Longmore; "and I'll take Harry Worrel with me."

"That is exactly what I wish to prevent," replied Tom Hamilton. "I've a word or two to say to Mr. Worrel, for which I must choose a proper moment."

"No new folly, no new folly, I hope, young man," said Mr. Longmore; "no more fighting, or you shall rue it."

"Oh no," answered Tom Hamilton, "there's no folly or fighting in it, either, unless good luck be fighting, and truth be folly."

"Truth, my dear sir," said the natural philosopher—"truth is an abstract proposition; simple, undoubted, absolute truth, such as, 'a whole is greater than a part.' It is axiomatic. Thus, I say, all right angles are equal to each other. Now, when I want to take an observation of the sun——"

"Perhaps, my dear friend," said the chevalier, "if you were to take an observation of the sun just now, you would see that he is not far from the meridian; and, as you have got to go far, and I should like to accompany you—at least part of the way—it may be as well to set out."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Mr. Longmore, bursting out into one of his old cheerful laughs—"so it may, chevalier, so it may. But one likes to instruct young people, you know; it does them good, it does them good to hear a little reason; for, as every plant wants water, so does that extraordinary plant, the human mind, require irrigation of its particular kind. But come, let us get upon our horses again. We'll have a chaise at Outrun, pay the boy well, and be back to dinner."

"Holla, chevalier! where are you going?" cried the voice of Mr. Longshanks, as soon as the commissioner put his foot in the stirrup—"you'll be wanted in a minute. Jerry Tripe is sent for, and, if you have a mind to have him committed for the robbery, you must stay and swear that he is the man who stopped you in the lane."

"I would rather not," replied the chevalier, swinging himself into the saddle; "I should not like to swear to such a fact."

"Take care that Puddenstream don't hear you," said Mr. Longshanks; "for he would tell you in a minute that the laws of the country are not to be trifled with, and that there are such things as misprison, condonation, covin, and a thousand other strange terms, the meaning of which he knows not in the least; just as my parrot says, 'God save King Charles,' without at all knowing that one unfortunate king of that name had his head chopped off not two centuries ago, and that the other had

a head which, though not worth the chopping, might just as well have been where his father's was for all the good it ever did his people. What I mean is, chevalier, that in this country people are not allowed to swear and not swear just when they like. I think you have already taken an oath that he was the man who robbed you."

"No, no!" replied Mr. de Lunatico—"I swore I had great suspicions that he was the man; but I have had the pleasure of seeing him twice since, and I now say I will not swear to him."

"Oh he, is it so?" said Mr. Longshanks, with a shrewd and somewhat impatient look. "I understand you, sir; and, as a child's play is not fit for magistrates, I shall at once move that he be discharged as soon as he is brought up."

"That may be a good plan," replied the chevalier, calmly taking his coat-tails out from between his nether man and the saddle.

"Hark ye, chevalier," said Mr. Longshanks, approaching him; "have you really got hold of the true story? or are you, too, such an ass as to be deceived by a piece of Tom-foolery?"

"I have got hold of the true story," replied the chevalier, drily, "and am not deceived by the Tom-foolery, as you will find when I return."

"If that's the case," said Mr. Longshanks, turning abruptly into the house, "I will have every thing ready for you."

Tom Hamilton smiled grimly as he heard all this enigmatical conversation, but uttered not a word. The chevalier and Mr. Longmore nodded to him kindly, and then, putting spurs to their steeds, set out at a good pace for the great gates of the park. At the sign of the Half Moon they got into a chaise; and, just as Mrs. Muggins was curtsying them off, a boy came up from Outrun Castle, requesting that lady to give Mr. Longshanks the pleasure of her company at the mansion towards the hour of seven. The chevalier smiled as he heard the invitation, and the chaise rolled off towards Oxborough.

Grave and important was the conversation between Mr. de Lunatico and Mr. Longmore, the whole of which we would willingly detail to the reader, but that already the book is waxing, like Falstaff, thick in the girth, and we must therefore confine ourselves to the mere heads. They first began talking about starry nebulae, and then deviated into fleas. This produced a grand discussion upon the spring contrivance which enables fleas to take so extensive a scope in their hop proceedings; and then, again, an ingenious comparison was instituted between the knees of a flea's hind leg and the base of a kangaroo's tail, which ended in a decision favourable to the flea, Mr. Longmore proving, to the satisfaction of the chevalier, that whereas the kangaroo could, at the most, spring fifteen times his own length, the flea, by the best computation, could hop five hundred and forty times his own length, in a direct line—even when out of practice—which, allowing for the parabolic curve described by the flea's course, would give a much greater extent. Mr. Longmore then accurately explained to his companion the nature of a sort of seven-league boots, constructed upon the same principle as the flea's knee, which would enable a man to take at one skip, upon an average, the distance of three thousand two hundred and forty feet,

which, as he justly observed, would greatly facilitate the marching of armies.

"Do you not think," asked the chevalier, in a mild and inquiring tone, "that one might break one's legs or one's neck in coming down?"

"The boots must be provided with feather-bed soles," replied Mr. Longmore.

"I understand," said the chevalier; "shoe your troop of horse with felt."

The conversation then rambled to frogs, and thence naturally proceeded to toads; then, by an easy transition, to holes, and thence to worms. Mines came next; and, as the stars are said from the bottom of a deep pit to be visible to the human eye at midday, so did Mr. Longmore turn his thoughts, upon the pivot of internal fires, from the bottom of a coal mine to the subject of planetary motion, explaining to the chevalier all that would take place if the order of the universe were altered or suspended, even for a moment. To have heard him talk you would have supposed that he had had a finger in creation, though he did not go to quite the blasphemous lengths of a certain Spanish king, who much wished to simplify God's own handiwork.

From the stars the excellent philosopher dropped suddenly into some fishpond, and he was conversing on this interesting topic, when he paused for an instant to put his head out of the carriage, saying, "That's our friend Rotundity's place."

They were passing at the moment some neat park pailing, and as the chevalier followed his friend's example and looked out, the ears of both were astounded by a loud scream from within the enclosure. The chaise was instantly stopped, both gentlemen sprang out, the chevalier vaulted over the pailing, Mr. Longmore got upon the top, and by aid of the postillion's two hands applied to the part of his person which he most exposed in the scramble, he was pushed into the enclosure; when following in the chevalier's wake he soon came to a little green lawn, amongst the trees, whence a second or third scream had just proceeded.

The sight that presented itself, when Mr. de Lunatico entered this shady blest retreat, had something both awful and ludicrous in it; for there, in a summer-house constructed with the ribs of a Greenland whale, surmounted by the pelvis of some extinct mammalia, stood Miss Serpentina Rotundity, with no other person than fair Laura Longmore herself behind her, and both undergoing the attack of a wild and furious-looking man, armed with a large stick.

But let it not be supposed that Miss Rotundity weakly yielded to womanly fear, for on the contrary, accustomed to contemplate the monstrous creations of remote ages, man seemed a dwarf to her expanded mind, and in comparison with her mammothian and mastodonie friends, the madman before her was no more than a snarling lap dog. Holding in one hand the tibia of a fossil elk, which formed no inconsiderable club, she protended in the other the ivory horn of an immense narwhal, as a sort of pike with which she kept the assailant at bay, giving him some tremendous pokes as he attempted to rush at her. Laura, for her part, contented herself with screaming, and the perti-

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nacious madman still endeavoured to pass through the narrow opening which Miss Rotundity so gallantly defended, exclaiming, "I will have her! He shall not marry her! He shall marry no one but our poor Betty! I'll have his blood!—Ah, here are the vermin coming," he continued, seeing the chevalier appear, and, very nearly at the same moment, two or three servants from the house, alarmed at the screams which they had heard; "but I'll have you—I'll have her another time." And away he darted into the wood, leaving Miss Rotundity a little out of breath with the exertions she had made in defence of her position, and Laura ready to drop with terror at this new encounter with the madman.

The next moment, however, the honest, round, intelligent, but somewhat self-satisfied countenance of her father appeared from amongst the trees, and springing to his arms, Laura was soon caught in the well-known embrace, the kindly pressure of which she had not felt for many a long and weary day.

"Ah, Longmore," cried Miss Rotundity, "is that you? and the chevalier too, I declare. Why, chevalier, you are quite a knight errant, coming to deliver two distressed damsels. But you shall be rewarded for your pains; I'll show you some splendid specimens of oolites, and neophites, and hiveites that young Jones, the incubus of the parish, has sent me.—Run, Tom, run, and you'll catch him by the west gate. He's as mad as a march hare, that's clear."

The latter part of the speech was addressed to all and sundry the footmen who now came up from the house, and who thereupon began the pursuit of poor Trollop the postman, but unfortunately without success; for with the cunning which is not only compatible with madness, but almost inseparable from it, he pursued his way with so many turnings and windings that, like a skilful Reynard before a young pack of hounds, he soon left the chace far on one side.

In the meanwhile Laura Longmore had told her father how glad she was to see him—on which point he did not doubt her in the least; and had then begun a hurried account of all her adventures, when the chevalier assured Miss Rotundity that it would give him the most exquisite satisfaction to see her oolites and her neophites, but he feared that he and his friend would not have time to stay, as they had promised to dine at Outrun Castle, and must consequently get back to keep their engagement.

"I am determined," said Mr. Longmore, "not to let my dear Laura be out of my sight for five minutes any more till she is married, and therefore I shall take her with me to Outrun this very night, Miss Rotundity, with many thanks for the kind hospitality which she tells me you have shown her since she came here from Oxborough. My dear chevalier, if you would but call up the post chaise to the house, we'll just ask Miss Rotundity to give us a glass of wine and a biscuit, and then we'll return to Outrun with as little delay as possible. You are agitated, my dear lady, you are agitated with this terrible attack of that unhappy man, whom they ought to have kept, as I ordered them, twelve months ago—you are agitated, and no wonder; so the least possible quantity of Madeira will do you no harm, or Laura either."

"Agitated?" cried Miss Rotundity, in an indignant tone: "I am not agitated in the slightest degree, I am as cool as a *caprotide*; and I think I defended the place very tolerably considering. My only fear was that my horns might break, and then I might have been obliged to take to my thigh bone, which would have been dangerous. Don't go, don't go, chevalier! Tom shall order up the chaise. Mr. Longmore, I will take your arms. Chevalier, you shall beau the young lady."

The chevalier was no way slack in following the hint of Miss Rotundity, and, as the paths were somewhat narrow he contrived with a sort of lover-like maneuvering to linger somewhat behind, pouring low-toned words into Laura's ear, and answering some quick and eager questions, which she addressed to him. Let not the suspicious reader, however, suppose that our excellent friend the chevalier was at all disposed to play Harry Werrel false, even if his years and character had not been impediments. He had a strong regard for Laura, it is true, but his was altogether a platonic affection, as the reader may very well suppose—for every one knows that platonic affections are mere matters of moonshine. However in the present instance he had remarked Laura turn a little pale, as Mr. Longmore announced his intention of not losing sight of her for five minutes till she was married, and coupled this annunciation with the determination of taking her immediately to Outrun Castle; and the chevalier perceiving with his peculiar tact all that was passing in the young lady's mind, began the conversation with a jocose account of the marriage of Mr. Fitzure, and informed her that his and her young friend, Harry Werrel, not knowing that her father was coming to seek her, had remained behind at Outrun Castle watching the proceedings.

In short, the chevalier conducted the affair of explanation in the most delicate and dexterous manner that diplomatist could dream of. He removed her apprehensions, he soothed her agitation, he deprived her fears of their object, he gave her news of her lover without shaking her nerves, and he perfectly reconciled her to the idea of returning to Outrun Castle, though half an hour before she would have regarded such a proceeding with horror.

Such being the case, and the biscuit being eaten, the Madeira swallowed, and the chaise brought round, Laura was soon equipped for her journey by the aid, and with some of the clothes, of her kind hostess, and the whole party set off on their return, taking an affectionate leave of Miss Serpentaria Rotundity. Now, we shall also beg leave to do the same, not in the least doubting that if it should fall out in the order of nature—or rather the disorder—that she should ever be imbedded in a stratum of blue lies, overwhelmed in some silicious deposit, or even surrounded by grey wacke, her fossilized bones will form the principal ornament of the cabinet of some unborn geologist, when a race of beings probably totally different from ourselves shall have succeeded to the human species, and which, for aught we know, may have two heads, and ten fingers on each hand with other striking improvements on the original type.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

HOW THE PEER SHOWED HIS GENIUS FOR JUNKETING—HOW TOM HAMILTON AND HARRY WORRELL WERE MADE FRIENDS—HOW JERRY TRIPS WAS SAVED FROM HIS PERIL, AND HOW MR. DARIUS INCITED HIM TO SOME UNKNOWN SPECIES OF ASSASSINATION.

GREAT were the doings at Outrun Castle, and it is wonderful with what rapidity preparations were made, orders executed, decisions taken, tables elongated, butts broached, corks drawn, fires kindled, illuminations made ready, and a great bonfire piled up in the park.

The peer had a genius for such things, and under the inspiring aspect of his rosy countenance, from which shone, as his panegyriste would have had it, mingled good-humour and dignity, promptitude united with grace, and fun with stateliness, all went on as rapidly and jowially as possible. Every man did his best, and every woman assumed that sweet, important, tittering alacrity which is always observable in the fair sex whenever any of those peculiar events take place in which woman holds an important part, such as births and marriages. The gamekeeper forgot their drubbing; the maids forgot the insult to their boxes; even the cook, though of an irate disposition, laid by her resentments, and prepared to cook a dinner without any of the gentle condiments of buckthorn, jalap, or ipecacuanha. The butcher spoke not of his bill, but agreed to take one of the fat bullocks out of Outrun park in exchange for one he had killed four days before; and the merry bells, ringing from the steeple, sounded as sweetly over Outrun as if the marriage-party had consisted of all the best and wisest and most innocent people in the world.

The magistrates crowded the library, assembling in little knots of two and three; the special constables amused themselves upon the terrace; and the boys shouted and gambolled in the park; while the rosy face and red velvet night-cap of the peer were seen in every place in turn, diffusing sunshine round. It is true that sunshine of another kind was not wanting, for the day was as fair a one as ever was seen, the air balmy, the clouds few and light; and poor Jane, if she drew her auguries from the sky, might have judged her wedding-day but the commencement of a long series of happy years—while all the time Fate sat in his dark corner whetting his knife.

Amongst other events of the morning, Tom Hamilton walked up to Harry Worrell with that sort of frank and kindly bearing which is not very easy to resist even in one whom we do not like; and holding out his hand, he said—

“Come, Mr. Worrell, let you and I be friends. We have once met upon a very disagreeable occasion; but I can assure you that none

of the events which led to that meeting, nor indeed any of those which have since followed, have had my sanction—but, on the contrary, my most decided opposition. You will believe me, I am sure, when I give you my honour that such is the case.”

Worrel gave him his hand, but at the same time he could not refrain from saying—

“I think it a pity, Mr. Hamilton, if such were your feelings, that you countenanced the proceedings of Mr. Fitzurse by coming with him to the ground.”

“Oh, those are cases, my dear sir,” replied Tom Hamilton, “in which one must stand by a friend, be he right or wrong. Fitzurse had no one to go with him, I was down here, you know, and there’s capital shooting and fishing here, and so you see—But, to change the subject, I have got some good news for you, only you must promise not to bolt, for there is a great deal to be done here to-night, and we shall want your assistance.”

“I really do not know what good I can be of here,” replied Harry Worrel. “I feel myself very much out of my element, I can assure you; and, indeed, my wits have scarcely recovered their equipoise since I discovered this most astounding marriage of your friend with the pretty housemaid. He certainly gave me most distinctly to understand that he was a suitor for the hand of Miss Longmore.”

“Pooh! that was all his father’s doing,” cried Tom Hamilton—“compulsion, my dear sir, compulsion—the pressure from without which in matrimony, as well as in politics, has more to do with the matter than people are at all aware of. Look through the register of St. George’s, Hanover-square, and tell me how many of the marriages there have been made from motives of pure affection—how many have been brought about by some of the many ever-acting impellants which are continually driving men forward towards that holy state without love having any thing to do with it. Interest, ambition, vanity, folly, fear, shame, disappointment, recklessness, despair—such is the crowd around the vestry-door, driving in ten to one that little Love leads quietly in by the hand. How many, I say, should we find hurried into marriage by such motives, if we could see the hearts as well as the names in the marriage-register.”

“It would be a long account I fear,” said Harry Worrel with a sigh.

“It is a long account,” replied Tom Hamilton, “and the balance is struck in the ecclesiastical courts. ’Tis an easy roll from St. George’s to Doctor’s Commons. But I have told you the truth. Nothing but some such motive would have ever induced Fitzurse to enter into the respectable condition of a married man.”

“Pray what may be the motive now?” demanded Worrel with a smile.

“But Tom, though he could not help a light laugh at the thought of the war-dance of the Tonga islands, was true to his friend, and did not hint at the strong persuasions of Mr. Darius.

“Come,” he said, “let me introduce him to you, and make you friends. I see him there in the other room with a certain travelled

gentleman, said to be a cousin of his bride's, who has very peculiar notions, so that Fitzurse is looking anxiously for me to divide the fire."

"But the good news? the good news?" said Worrel; "if it refers to Miss Longmore, and my mind is set at ease upon her account, you may do what you will with me for the rest of the day."

"Well, it does refer to her," replied Tom Hamilton; "and she is safe and sound. I myself helped her out of a difficulty yesterday, and I have since heard she is safe and well at Oxborough."

Worrel looked round for his hat which he had laid down, but Tom Hamilton caught him by the arm saying, "You promised to stay!—Her father and the chevalier have gone for her, and I think you will soon see her here."

"But a difficulty," said Worrel; "you say you aided her in a difficulty—may I ask the circumstances?"

"Oh, it was nothing," replied Tom Hamilton, who, like all men of his calibre, made light of the best things he did; "I found her attacked by five blackguards, so I floored two of them and a madman coming up to help me the rest took to their heels. But come, my dear sir, Fitzurse is beckoning to me."

Worrel, however, shook his hand warmly, thanking him with feelings that only a lover's heart can know, and just as they were going into the next room, who should appear in the library but Jeremiah Tripe in the profane hands of two constables.

Jerry's face was to say sooth as ever, and his nose no less resplendent than upon former occasions, though his beard wanted a touch of razor or axarite, and his face might have been improved in hue by some soap and water. He cast a half merry, half anxious glance around, for, to speak the truth, he was rather alarmed about various matters.

The moment he appeared, however, the magistrates formed themselves round the table, and the peer, coming in hot from some of his joyful preparations, took Jerry by the hand, looking in his face with a somewhat serious shake of the head.

"Well, my lord, I could not help it," said Jerry; "the cat was out of the bag before I pulled the string."

"How did she get out?" demanded the peer.

"By a hole in the bottom," answered Jerry Tripe; and the two seeming perfectly to understand each other, the magistrates proceeded to business.

The prosecutor was called, but did not appear; he was called a second time, but no voice answered.

"I propose that he be remanded for further examination," said Mr. Puddenstream; "the ends of justice must not be frustrated."

"Fiddlestick's ends!" said Mr. Longshanks. "I myself heard the chevalier declare that he would not or could not swear to the man. So did you, Tom Hamilton. Let the man be discharged."

"But I contend, sir," said Mr. Puddenstream, "that this here is neither more nor less than confounding of felony."

"I would have sworn it!" said Mr. Longshanks. "But we'll put

the matter to the vote. What do you say, Rotundity? You, Johnston? You, Winckworth? You, Mr. Shrimpseye? Discharged! Let the man be discharged. Where's that fool of a clerk? Let the warrant be discharged, sir. Constables, set him free on payment of fees."

Mr. Puddenstream entered his protest, and made a speech; but in the meantime Jerry Tripe was discharged from custody, and the peer, without suffering him to take a moment's repose, slapped him on the shoulder, exclaiming—

"Come, Jerry! To the cellar! to the cellar! There are plenty of things to do, and no time to do them. Broach the '89, set the ale a-flowing, bring up a hundred bottles of port, and claret in proportion; don't forget the champagne and the *cote roti*, a little Maraschino de Zara, and all the rest! Away with you, Jerry! away with you! By jingo, we'll have all the parish as drunk as Chloe!"

Jerry hastened to obey, but just as he got into the hall, Mr. Darius, with an eager and ogreish expression of countenance, approached him at a rapid pace—Mr. Fitzurse pulling the tails of his coat in vain. The tall man grasped Jerry's arm and whispered two or three sentences to him with a solemn and secret air. Jerry looked up at length with a benignant smile, replying aloud—

"Certainly, sir! certainly! I will have one killed immediately!"

"Make yourself easy, my dear cousin," said Mr. Darius, turning to the hopeful heir of the house of Outran with a patronizing air—
"Make yourself easy! he will have one killed immediately!"

Mr. Fitzurse retreated into the other room, but the words of his new relation did not seem to have the effect of making him easy, for he was as pale as death, and seemed somewhat sick at the stomach.

CHAPTER LXIX.

HOW JOEY PIKE ASSUMED HIS DIGNITY—HOW THE TRUTH CAME OUT—HOW HARRY WORRELL RECEIVED GREAT BENEFIT FROM THOMAS HAMILTON, ESQ.—AND HOW HE APPEARED IN A NEW CHARACTER.

STILL the preparations went on at Outran Castle, still every body was in a bustle, still cricket was played in the park, still the little boys pinched each other, and the little girls chatted together in corners and pointed to the windows of the castle, and still the cooks and scullions were all as busy as the under-ground gentlemen in white caps mentioned in that veracious history—"Ricquet with the Tuft." But where was Joey Pike—where was grand Joey?

Joey for the time had absconded. Although he had that morning dressed himself in what he conceived to be the most exquisite and appropriate style, for the purpose he had in view, for the touching, for

the tender, for the pathetic, he now felt, with that delicate perception of the harmony of all things for which he was conspicuous, that the same dress was not becoming and adapted to his new position as the acknowledged nephew of Viscount Outrun, and he therefore hurried away to Market Greenford, where in the shop of a general provider of habiliments he furnished himself, from some money he had saved out of what the chevalier had given him, with a neat pair of black tights, silk stockings, and shoes. His blue coat he thought would do, but a white waistcoat was added in honour of the wedding, and as it was rather too large in the girth, and descended too far upon the lumbar and abdominal regions—a thing that Joey Pike, in his exquisite notions of costume, could by no means tolerate—he waited till it was altered.

He then went to the shop of a printer, and forgetting that he must have had a father, though he did not know who that father was, he ordered a hundred cards to be struck off, with the simple inscription of "Mr. Fitzurse." If he had dared he would have put a note of admiration after it.

"When does your master want them?" asked the printer, who knew Joey's face as well as that of the stage coachman.

"My master?" said Joey with a supercilious air: "I have no master! I am my own *maetero*. The cards are for myself. I am Mr. Fitzurse!"

"Why, Joey, you are mad," said the printer.

"You will find yourself mistaken," replied Joey with a cold and contemptuous air. "When the cards are done send them up to Outrun Castle; say they are for his lordship's nephew—Mr. Joseph Fitzurse, not the Honourable Henry Frederic Augustus."

The printer stared till his eyes looked like those of a strangled mouse, and Joey having produced the exact effect which he could have most desired, left the shop, and, followed by the boy bearing his bundle, returned by the most private ways to Outrun Castle, sneaked in by the back door, up the back staircase, and into one of the untenanted rooms, where he prepared to perform the ceremonies of his toilet with the utmost precision. But alack-and-a-well-a-day, he suddenly discovered that he had committed a great oversight. His hair—his beautiful, flowing hair—was dry and rough.

What could he do? The little boy was still standing gazing at him in great admiration, and Joey took him tenderly by the hand, saying,

"Wilt thou speed back, *mon garçon*, to the village of Outrun; and ask Signora Muggins of the Half Moon to give you a small bottle of *huile antique*, which stands on the window sill in the back attic behind a broken circular looking-glass? You know what I mean—*huile antique*."

"Oh I know quite well," replied the boy. "You mean *huile antique*—they sell it at Thomson's, next door but one to our shop. I'll fetch it in a minute."

But the faithless boy's minute proved three quarters of an hour at least, and Joey Pike's toilet was not concluded till the hour of dinner was near at hand. Then, however, with one last look at the glass to satisfy himself that he was perfection, he descended in his own incum-

parable manner, displaying more exquisite attitudes upon one flight of stairs than can be found in the galleries of Florence, Rome, and Naples.

With conscious dignity, with the expectation of striking all dumb by his charming deportment, but yet with a slight flutter from the conviction that all eyes and thoughts would be upon him in an instant, Joey entered the drawing-room of Outrun Castle, which by this time was crowded by gentlemen waiting for their dinner. All the magistrates who had proceeded to the attack of the castle were there, the chevalier and Mr. Longmore had returned, Dr. Hookham had brought his lady, and a young lady friend of hers, to give grace to the scene and countenance to the bride; and pretty Laura Longmore herself, dressed somewhat strangely—for all her own clothes had been destroyed, as the reader well knows, in the fire at Ivy Hall—but still gracefully, for she had carried her trousseau away with her, was seated near a window looking out into the park, with Tom Hamilton on one side and Harry Worrel on the other.

Laura had been just recounting to Worrel her deliverance from the guineas, and verifying in her own mind the proverb that "What is one man's meat is another man's poison," by thanking her happy stars that she was not in that situation of which poor Jane at the other side of the room was as proud as a peacock. Tom Hamilton and Worrel were shaking hands with each other at the conclusion of Laura's story, and Mr. Longmore was standing with his pigtail elevated at an angle of forty-five by the cape of his coat, his hands hooked together by the forefingers behind his back, and his tongue glibly demonstrating to Mr. Rotundity sundry strange propositions, to all of which the worthy alderman replied by some admirable classical quotations from the same sources as usual.

Joey took the first step in the room, but no eye lighted upon him. Joey took the second, but nobody noticed him. At the third, Joey jostled some magistrates, yet they paid not the slightest attention to him. At the fourth, indignant Joey trod upon Mr. Puddenstream's toe, and Mr. Puddenstream d——d him. Frustrated at all points Joey approached the peer, nor was he disappointed in his anticipations of avuncular affection.

"Ah, Joey, my boy," cried his lordship, laying his hand on his shoulder with a weight that nearly knocked him down, "where have you been all this time, Joey? Yet you were right, you were right. I like modesty, though I can't say I ever had much of it myself. But, by jingo, I must introduce you to my friends. Here, Mr. Longmore, here, Longshanks, Puddenstream, gentlemen all, let me introduce to you my nevy—my nevy Joey. He tells me he is my sister's son by a private marriage. I dare say it's quite true, for I have heard something of the kind, so I don't mean to disown him."

Joey simpered, and blushed, and looked interesting.

"Now for it," said Mr. Longshanks.

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Jerry Tripe, who was opening the door to announce dinner, and now held both his fat sides and rolled about like a humming top. "Ha, ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho, ho! He, he, he!"

and Jerry wept, and wiped the moisture with his knuckles from the corner of his eyes.

"Why what the devil's the matter?" cried the peer. "By jingo, you're mad, Jerry."

"Oh, ho, ho, ho, ho! Ah, ha, ha, ha!" shouted Jerry Tripe, with such unction and fun that nobody in the room could resist it, and first one universal titter, and then one general roar ran round and round. But the peer became furious; and Jerry seeing his master so, strove to explain, his words being still broken by cachinnations.

"Joey Pike your lordship's nephew—ha, ha, ha!" cried Jerry; "and you not disown him—ho, ho, ho! Look at him in his tights—he, he, he! Lord have mercy upon us—he, ha, he!"

"Why he said you did not deny it!" exclaimed the peer. "Has the scoundrel been imposing upon me?"

"Oh no, no," cried Jerry, still moved by irresistible laughter. "It's all true, it's all true. I did not deny any thing. I thought he would have killed me with laughing in the black hole, but I never thought the fun would fly so high as this. Lord have mercy upon us! Joey Pike your lordship's nephew! Ha, ha, ha! Why he's a by-blow of old Scapulary's!"

Every body looked at the other with amazement not unmingled with merriment, while Joey Pike started back, stretched out his two arms at full length in the same direction, which was towards Jerry Tripe's nose, and shouted forth at the top of his voice "'Tis false!" Then suddenly drawing himself up into an air of dignified contempt, he thrust his right hand into his breast, let the left drop by his side, and rolling his eyes away from Jerry Tripe, he muttered in the accents of scorn "*Pas vrai*."

"'Tis not false," said Jerry Tripe, coming forward; "and I can prove it, Master Joey, if you come to that."

"Then I suppose I have got no nevy after all?" rejoined the peer, while the heart of poor Joey swelled with indignation.

"I can't say that, my lord," replied Jerry; "nor, perhaps, is Joey here quite so much to blame; for there have been rumours and tales about, and facts have come out one way or another, which Joey, like a goose, has applied to himself. But you had better ask the chevalier about it as you are in want of a nephew."

"Why what the devil can the chevalier know?" cried the peer. "He seems to have his finger in every pie."

"That's the very express purpose I came here for," said the chevalier, advancing calmly; "and in regard to this affair I can give you some information. Your lordship has shown this day that you are perfectly ready to acknowledge a nephew if you find him."

"Why certainly," replied the peer, "if he can prove himself to be such. By jingo, he'll get devilish little from me, so it does not so much matter. So out with the story, good Mr. Lunatico—where is this fine boy?"

"Oh we will soon call him," said the chevalier. "Mr. Worrel, will you do me a favour?"

“Certainly, my dear chevalier,” said Worrel, coming forward; “I feel a deep interest in this matter, for poor Lady Maria Fitzurse was the bosom friend of my dear mother.”

“She was something more,” replied the chevalier in a grave tone. “She was your mother!—Lord Outram, I present to you your sister’s son by her husband, Colonel Worrel. Look at him, and compare his face with the image stamped indelibly upon your mind of hers, and tell me if you do not recognise her child?”

The peer looked somewhat pale. “By jingo,” he said, “he’s very like, now I think of it. Old Scapulary did sometimes threaten something about bringing forward a son, but I never half believed him.”

“It is quite true, my lord,” said Jerry Tripe in a sad tone. “Lady Maria certainly had a son.”

“I don’t see how that could be either,” cried the peer, knitting his brows thoughtfully. “Come, Jerry, I’ve been made a fool of once to-day, and so I’ll be fully satisfied before I give in this time. Come let us hear how it all was as you seem to know so much about it. I don’t mean to say that they were not privately married—that I know too well—but they were separated directly, for he was under age, and then she was dead before he came back from the army. Let us hear all about it, Master Jerry. If it can be proved let it be proved—I won’t say no.”

“My part of the story will soon be told, my lord,” replied Jerry Tripe, “if I have your lordship’s leave to tell it.”

“Speak, speak,” said the peer: “as the matter has begun we must go on: truth never gets only the head and shoulders out; the whole body follows sooner or later.”

“Well, then,” continued Jerry, “don’t you recollect, my lord, how my young lady went to the masqued ball in the dress she had been painted in—the grey satin and the black mantilla? and how you heard that she was going to run away with the colonel, whom you had found once walking with her in the park, and went and waited outside till they came out, and caught her just upon the steps of the carriage, and knocked him down and horsewhipped her?”

“Hush, hush!” cried the peer. “Don’t talk about that,” and his eyes fell gravely to the ground.

“Well,” continued Jerry, “he called you out, you know, and you fought in the lane, and he shot you in the side, and left you for dead.”

“Ay, then he ran away,” replied the peer, “and went to join his regiment in Germany.”

“No, that he didn’t,” answered Jerry Tripe, “for he was in England two months after that; and when my young lady was sent to your aunt’s, Lady Grace, he saw her often enough there, as the housekeeper can tell, for she was Lady Grace’s maid then; and he came down here once after that too, to seek for the marriage register, but he didn’t find what he wanted, for as soon as your lordship discovered they had been really married you made old Scapulary tear the leaf out. That’s all I know of the matter, for afterwards, when Lady Maria came back here, I went with your lordship to London, and we stayed there a

great many months. But old Scapulary has often told me that, notwithstanding all the people you put to watch her, Lady Maria had been out one whole day, and up at the Half Moon with Mr. and Mrs. Worrel, the colonel's brother and sister-in-law. The servants told me so too, and that when she came back she was more like one dead than alive. After that time, you know, my lord, she, who had been so healthy, and so gay and happy, grew very sickly, and all the world said——. However there's no use of talking of that, for she died little better than a year after."

Jerry paused, the peer mused, but Mr. Longshanks walked quietly to the door, and, opening it, exclaimed aloud, "Send in Mrs. Muggins."

Almost immediately after, the landlady of the Half Moon made her appearance, curtsying as she came in, and approaching the place where the peer stood with his back leaning against one of the tables.

"Now, Mrs. Muggins," cried Lord Outrun, "what have you to say?"

"I am ready to say all I know, my lord," replied Mrs. Muggins, who never lost her self-possession, "if I am properly required to do so."

"Then I require you," said Mr. Longshanks—"I require you, as a magistrate, to tell the truth and the whole truth. Answer my questions, Mrs. Muggins. On the twentieth day of July, in the year 17—, did not Lady Maria Fitzurse, or Worrel, as I ought to call her, come up to your house, the Half Moon?"

"Lord, sir, you know as well as I do," replied Mrs. Muggins.

"It doesn't matter what I know, woman," replied Mr. Longshanks. "What you know is the matter in question now. I'll speak in my turn, and speak to the purpose, never you fear. You tell your tale now, that's all you have to do."

"Well, then, I will tell my tale, sir," said Mrs. Muggins, in a somewhat offended tone. "Lady Maria did come up to my house on the twentieth day of July, 17—, and a terrible state she was in, poor thing. I happened to be at the door, and I saw her; she was on foot, poor thing, and had on what we used to call her night-clothes in those days, though they were no night-clothes at all, for that matter, and she had a large cloak over that——."

"What the devil signifies what she had on?" said the peer.

"It signified a great deal to her, sir, at the time," replied Mrs. Muggins; "for she was not in a way to be seen walking in the street; and she said, 'Oh, Mrs. Muggins, is Mrs. Worrel here? Take me to her directly, if she is, and don't let anybody see me.' So I made her a curtsy, and said, 'Yes, my lady,' and took her directly up stairs to the front sitting-room—the *Chancellor*, we call it, I don't know why—where Mr. and Mrs. Worrel were sitting, and she ran in, and fell into Mrs. Worrel's arms, and began to cry, and said, 'Oh, Mrs. Worrel, I am so ill I feel as if I should die;' and Mrs. Worrel whispered a word or two to her, and she answered, 'Yes, yes, it is so, it is so, I fear.' Then Mr. Worrel, who was a kind man, took her hand, and said, 'Don't be

alarmed, my dear lady, you are with your brother and sister, who will protect you against the whole world, and do every thing for you ;' and while he was talking to her, Mrs. Worrel came up to me, and said in a whisper, 'Send for a doctor, Mrs. Muggins, as quietly as possible, and get a nurse—but neither doctor nor nurse out of this village—and, for God's sake, see for some baby-clothes.' I had plenty of my own, just then, for I had not been married above a year, and had lost my own baby, so I felt for the poor thing—to be brought to bed in a strange place, with her husband far away fighting the French, and her brother that she dare not open her lips to, and her father not long dead, who used to make her his pet!—and I got all the things ready, and I sent for Mr. Longshanks there, who was then a young surgeon at Market Greenford, before he went to India and became a great man ; and the baby was born in the bed-room behind the sitting-room, not two hours after she entered the house. But she declared all the time that she must go back to the castle, for she was afraid that her brother would kill her if he heard that she stayed away ; and Mr. Longshanks there said that, if she went at all, she had better go as soon as ever she could ; and, before she had been six hours in the house, what with caudle and one thing and another, we got her strengthened up, and wrapped her in cloaks, and put her into a chaise, and sent her home. And I heard afterwards she pretended nothing was the matter, but that she was tired with too long a walk, and sat up to keep up the appearance of being well till she fainted dead away. Mr. and Mrs. Worrel came into the house with no baby, nor the likelihood of any, but they went away with a fine boy, and Mr. Longshanks marked him on the arm with gunpowder. Some six months after that they brought him down again, and a note was sent secretly to the castle, and Lady Maria came up again to see him ; and a fine work we had, for she fainted away when she thought of parting with him ; and from that hour she got worse, till she died."

The peer had sunk into a chair, and covered his eyes with his hands, while the good woman spoke ; and the rest of the party had made a small circle round, with Mrs. Muggins, Mr. Longshanks, and Jeremiah Tripe, Esq., a little in advance of the rest ; while Harry Worrel remained behind the surgeon, with his eyes bent upon the ground, for he dared not raise them, lest they should run over with the mingled tears of grief and indignation. Laura Longmore stood on one side of him, and her father on the other ; and as the good landlady uttered the words, "till she died," Laura's fair, soft fingers stole round his hand, pressing it gently, as the best and only consolation she could give.

"Now, my lord," said Mr. Longshanks, "is this enough for you ? or must I tell you, too, that this is your sister's son—that I bled him one day when he broke his head, like a fool, out hunting—and that I saw the mark upon his arm which I myself made twenty-five years ago ? I saw him when he was two years old—when he was five years old. I know that Mr. and Mrs. Worrel never had a child, though they adopted him, and always called him their own without daring to tell the truth ; for you have been all your life, sir, a furious and a wilful man ; and there are few people in this world, composed as it is of dolts, blockheads,

knaves, and madmen, who have common sense and common courage enough to face a fellow who chooses to have his own way, heedless of the consequences to himself and others."

Lord Outrun removed his hands from his eyes, and rose slowly from his chair, waving to Mr. Longshanks to hold his tongue.

"You are a good man, Longshanks," he said, "but a great brute. I am troubled enough; don't trouble me any more. Harry," he continued, throwing his arms round Worrel—"Harry, will you forgive me? I behaved like a brute and a scoundrel to your poor mother; and, bad and riotous as I have always been, I should not have been half so bad, if the thought of what I had done to her, and what I had made her suffer, had not haunted me through life, and made me fly from bad to worse, just to drown thought and drive care away. Harry, will you forgive me?"

"I will, my lord," replied Harry Worrel; "though the debt is a heavy one, yet I am sure, if I judge my mother aright, she would forgive you, after the acknowledgment you have made, and I must not refuse to do so likewise. But one thing is absolutely necessary, my lord. A stain rests upon my birth—a stain rests upon my mother's fair fame, till you produce the leaf that you caused to be torn out of the register. It is absolutely necessary that that should be immediately brought forward and restored to its original place."

"Jerry, I told you to get it from the old man's widow," cried the peer. "Have you found it—heard of it? Where is it?"

"I don't know, indeed, my lord," replied Jerry Tripe. "Widow Scapulary and I searched for it, but could not find it. But I have since——"

"But it shall be found," cried the peer—"by jingo! it shall be found. It is but right to the lad, and to the family of Fitzurse, too, that the register should be produced. I will pull the old woman's house down, but I will find it."

"She is gone to gaol, my lord, for the murder of her husband," replied Jerry Tripe. "But I was going to tell your lordship that Smalldram, the tinman, who helped her in the job, told me in the black hole at Market Greenford, that he had thrown it away when he was chased by the constables, the Lord knows where, upon the common."

"Was ever any thing so unlucky?" cried the peer. "By jingo! the paper must be all in a mess, even if we should find it, for it rained as hard as it could pour in the night."

"This is the way," cried Mr. Longshanks, "that sin and folly have gone on begetting sorrow and wrong, from the first beginning of the world till now. We not only find one evil act produce another in the man who commits it, but it carries on its pestiferous influence to thousands of others. The plague, as an infectious disease, is nothing to be compared to wickedness; and I do declare that, with Lord Outrun here in the middle of us, and my friend Puddenstream within a few miles, I wonder there is one virtuous or wise man in the parish, such is the focus of contagion here produced. What the devil are you about, Tom Hamilton? Must you always be pushing yourself forward where

there is mischief going on, or even being talked about? What's all this business to you? Go and shoot magpies; the season for butchering partridges and massacring hares has not yet commenced, I believe."

"My good friend," said Tom Hamilton, "pray let other people have one word as well as yourself. This is indeed a very unfortunate business that the register should be lost. I would propose that it should be immediately cried, and a reward offered for it. What shall we say, Worrel—what will you give? What do you say, viscount?"

"By jingo! I don't know," replied Lord Outran. "I'd give a great deal, but I haven't an acre unmortgaged, except the gamekeeper's cottage at the end of the park, and the three fields round it. But I'll give that with all my heart."

"I will give one half of what I possess," exclaimed Harry Worrel.

"And I'll give five hundred pounds," exclaimed Mr. Longmore.

"Well then," said Tom Hamilton, drawing out an old dirty pocket-book, "these being the rewards offered, here is the register, picked up by me on seeing the murderer Small dram throw it away, as I came over the common with Miss Longmore here. I shall claim all the rewards, but only one of them for myself. You, my noble lord, shall immediately settle the gamekeeper's cottage and the unmortgaged lands round it upon your fair daughter-in-law here, as I believe it is the only thing you can settle. You, Mr. Longmore, shall bestow the five hundred pounds on our poor friend, Joey Pike, to console him for his disappointment. He will, moreover, have about an equal sum, I find, out of the property of old Scapulary; for in this pocket-book is also a will, drawn up the day before his death, in his own hand-writing, which will convey his money—though, not being witnessed, his houses will go somewhere else—so that Joey will now have an opportunity of pursuing his taste for the fine arts at leisure. As for the half of your property, Worrel, all I covet is a large share of your friendship; but I am afraid the best half of your affection is taken possession of already."

"Pon my soul, Tom Hamilton, you're a fine fellow," cried the peer, shaking him by the hand.

"He is not so bad as I thought him," said Mr. Longbanks.

"The dinner must be getting cold," said Mr. Deputy Popeseye.

"I had the fish and soup taken down," said Jerry Tripe; "for I saw it would be a long story; but they will be up again in an instant."

And when they were, the whole company walked in to dinner.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE LAMENTABLE CONDITION OF MR. PIKE—THE RELIEF HE RECEIVED FROM THE CONDESCENSION OF THE PEER—MR. DARIUS IN HIS GLORY—HOW THE FESTIVITIES OF OUTRUN CASTLE HAD A TRAGIC CONCLUSION, AND THE ORDERS OF MR. DARIUS WAS TURNED INTO SHAME.

POOR Joey Pike stood in profound humiliation in the midst of the drawing-room, as one by one the guests of Outrun Castle moved in procession into the dining-room.

"*Son rovinato,*" cried Joey, "*O Dio che pena !*"

Mrs. Muggins had retired from the room, and he was all alone ; but had all the world and his wife been there, Joey would not have seen them, so full was he of his own thoughts, so completely buried in profound sadness regarding his own situation. Deep, and dark, and terrible were his imaginings as he saw all his fair prospects blown to the winds—as he perceived, that if he abandoned the name of Pike he must take up the appellation of Scapulary. Horrible, horrible, most horrible, he thought, and then his mind reverted to the dinner he had lost, not grieving for it on any gastronomic motives, but thinking over all the graces he had intended to display, remembering how he had proposed to take wine with one, to converse with another, to smile upon a third, to trifle with chickens, to flirt with partridges, and to display all the airs and graces of an empty-headed man of fashion. While he remained in these meditations, some one came into the room with a stealthy step, but Joey did not mind it : the curtains rustled behind him, but he heeded not the sound. At length, however, the door of the dining-room opened again, and one of the servants appearing pronounced the ecstatic words—

"My lord begs that you would come in to dinner."

Joey instantly glissaded to the door, and the moment after he found himself at the end of the convivial board.

"Sit down, Joey, sit down," cried the peer ; "this is the anniversary of the world being turned topsy-turvy, and you shall have one day of it at least."

Joey glided into a vacant chair, and commenced doing the graceful to his highest satisfaction. In the meantime, every one was busy with the fish and soup, and the first awful silence which, at a grand dinner, always precedes the storm of words with which it ends, reigned over the table. Joey, however, displayed his graces, as he was fully capable of doing, in silence as well as in conversation. He finished his soup he ate his fish, he then swung his right arm over the back of his chair, raised his eyes towards the lustre over the table, and swept back the long lines of his hair from his phrenological development.

f. In the meantime, Mr. Darius was in his glory: he sat upon the left hand of Mr. Fitzurse—now related to him by the ties of marriage—having a young lady brought by the fair dame of Dr. Hookham upon his own left, who was nearly as great a goose as his other neighbour. She had all the sweet qualities, too, of that most delightful of all creatures, called a flirt, and she would have talked to Mr. Darius of any thing or every thing under the sun, from metaphysics to adultery, rather than not have talked to him at all, or missed one iota of his attention and admiration.

Ye gods and little fishes! how Mr. Darius did go on, under such pleasant circumstances! Confining himself in no degree within the narrow limits of the stale and rusty iron of truth, he soared into the regions of imagination; probability itself had no charm for him, and one must acknowledge that he had chosen a wide field for himself. To believe him, he had seen the whole world and every thing it contained; and certainly, according to his account, there were many more things in it than any one else on earth suspected. The wall of China was as familiar to him as the streets of London; he had driven four-in-hand through the streets of Pekin. With the King of Ava he was hand and glove; they used to smoke their hookahs together on a white Siamese elephant; and he assured Mr. Fitzurse that he had aided that great monarch in the impalement of three hundred of his principal officers who had slept too late one drizzly morning.

Then, however, he changed the scene, and told a softer tale—how he had trifled with beauty in the earthly paradise of Cachmere; how sweet girls, only second to Houris, had combed his beard and curled his whiskers as he lay on beds of roses, lulled into a semi-slumber by the sound of innumerable lutes. One would have thought he was Lalla Rookh, or some of her friends. Then, soaring far away, he plunged into the dark forests of the north west, hunted, and scalped, and fought the grizzly bear with the six nations and their allies. He repeated some stanzas of a Cherokee war song, and dwelt with a solemn delight upon the joys of filling the nose of an enemy with brimstone matches and setting them on fire, while the dusky company danced round the victim in mockery.

Mr. Fitzurse did not like the conversation at all; his dinner was not palatable to him, and he was remarked to change colour more than once, while a slight aguish tremor of the hand evinced itself at peculiar periods of Mr. Darius's discourse, which the other saw with delight, and proceeded thereupon with increased vigour. From North America he got back to India, and talked in a more civilized strain of shooting a few friends in the most honourable manner. He assured his companions on the right and left that when he had a little affair of the kind on hand he never sighted his adversary in the slightest degree. "I take one look at him," he said, "fix on the spot where I intend to hit him, then raise my pistol, keeping my elbow tight to my side, pull the trigger, and down he comes. Remember that, Fitzurse, remember that! It's perfectly invariable; keep your elbow tight to your side, and you can't miss him."

"I caen, though," said Mr. Fitzurse, with his usual drawl.

"You mean, perhaps, that you may kill him when you only intend to wound him," said Mr. Darius; "but a little practice will set all that to rights. Why, I recollect, my dear madam, at a great ball at Calcutta, a young lady refused to dance with me because she was in love with a young gentleman I knew very well, and wanted to dance with him. Well, presently after he came in and took her out. I said she must not dance, she must sit down; he said she shouldn't, so I just whispered in his ear, 'You are a good dancer, Jack, but you shall never dance again.' The next morning we met, and he was in a great fright, as you may suppose. 'You are not going to kill me, Darius?' he said. 'Oh, no, Jack,' I replied. 'Make yourself easy, I am only going to spoil your dancing. Take care of your knees, my good friend;' and while they were giving the words I just whistled a bit of the country dance he had been jigging in the night before; the moment the signal was given, crack went my pistol, and down he went with his knee knocked all to smash. Poor devil, they were obliged to cut his leg off. You must have seen him about London, walking about with a wooden leg."

"No, I haevn't," said Mr. Fitzurse, pettishly.

Mr. Darius bent upon him a stern, inquiring look, as much as to say, "What's the meaning of that tone?" and Mr. Fitzurse shrunk into nothing in a moment.

"Poor fellow," said the young lady, in reply to his former speech, "I think you might have forgiven him."

"I make it a point," said Mr. Darius, "of never forgiving an offence. It is by far the most Christian and charitable plan, for when once it is generally known that such is your resolution, no offences are given, and you go on in peace and charity with all men. I declare, if my own brother were to offend me, I'd kill him and eat him directly."

"Eat him?" cried the young lady, in a high treble: "eat him?"

"Oh, no, no," replied Mr. Darius, with an affected and somewhat fiendish laugh, "not exactly eat him. It's only a form of speech, you know—isn't it, Fitzurse? You can't think how nice man is though," he said, sinking his voice to a whisper.

"La!" said the young lady.

"I can assure you," continued Mr. Darius, "it's worth a trip to the Tonga Islands just to taste man properly dressed," and he wiped the corners of his mouth with his napkin, as if the very thought made it water.

"I don't know," he proceeded, whispering in Mr. Fitzurse's ear—"I don't know whether your cook is clever, but I gave very precise directions, and if she have followed them, you will taste something such as you never tasted before."

Mr. Fitzurse was as silent as the grave, but his eyes swam in his head; and at that very moment Jerry Tripe with one hand put a dish upon the table, just before Mr. Darius. That gentleman turned his head over his shoulder, and inquired, "Is this it?" Jerry nodded his head, and while the Honourable Henry Frederick Augustus turned as pale as his napkin, Mr. Darius rubbed his hands slowly with evident satisfaction.

In the meantime, Mr. Winterton and Mr. Longshanks had been at war at the other side of the table; and while the other dishes were being put on, and before the covers were removed, the surgeon was heard to end the conversation in his caustic and decided manner, saying—

“In the course of a long life, sir, I have met with many egregious fools, both in public and in private capacities, but the greatest that ever I met with, heard, or dreamed of, are those who contend that men who are, by knowledge and intelligence, unfit for the construction of a mousetrap, without education, without principles, and without conduct, ought to be admitted to a share in governing a great country. You say, admit them to that share, and the government they will choose will educate them, and teach them intelligence and virtue. That, sir, is to expect that evil will produce good, folly wisdom, ignorance learning; and there can be no earthly doubt to any man who has wit, candour, or honesty, that the bad will choose bad, and the foolish foolish representatives. Let us hear no more nonsense upon the subject, for until all the world be rendered good and wise universal suffrage can only produce universal confusion—as we see exemplified in America, where the only bonds that hold society together are the laws and customs which they derived from the country whose authority they have abjured; and daily those laws and customs are giving way before the pressure of democratic violence, like old flood-gates swept away by an overwhelming torrent.”

While these things were proceeding at various parts of the table, Lanra Longmore was seated happily between her father and her lover; and the peer was chatting gaily with his son's bride upon his right hand, who for her part was conducting herself with great propriety of demeanour, and replying timidly but not ungracefully to the jests and gibes of her noble father-in-law.

Just at the moment that Mr. Longshanks finished his oration, the covers were suddenly removed from the dishes, and various people asked various other people what they would take. The young lady next to Mr. Darius took some venison; and that gentleman then turned to Mr. Fitzurse, saying, “Let me help you to some of this,” and pointing to the dish before him, in which, amongst rich sauces and gravies, appeared a number of small ribs and bones, covered with a tender white meat, looking somewhat like that of a young pig, but without its fat.

“No; I think I will have some venison,” said Mr. Fitzurse, in a faint tone, turning his head away.

“Fitzurse!” said Mr. Darius, in a stern and solemn voice.

“I caen't,” said Mr. Fitzurse; “I had raether not.”

“What, sir!” rejoined his companion, in a low but fierce tone.

“Do you mean to say you can eat none, after I have taken the trouble of having it dressed expressly for you? Do you mean to insult me, sir?”

“No, no, no, no,” cried Mr. Fitzurse, in accents of despairing resignation. “Well, demm it, if I must, I must—so give me some of

it;" and he pushed forward his plate without waiting for the assistance of a servant.

"The ribs are best," said Mr. Darius, helping him; "the ribs are *delicious!*" he added in a fee-faw-fum tone, which made all the blood in his companion's body grow cold.

Mr. Fitzurse drew the plate to him, cut off a piece with a trembling hand, and raised it to his lips. But nature could bear no more; he dropped the fork from his hand, and crying "Ugh!" with a face as pale as death, started up from the table, and darted towards the drawing-room door.

"Why, Freddy, what's the matter?" said the peer, while Jane rose to run to his assistance.

"I am sick at the stomach," cried Mr. Fitzurse; "I caen't stand it, —demme me if I can!" and he threw open the door into the other room.

The farce was succeeded by a tragedy, however; for the first thing he beheld before him, as the door flew back under his hand, was the wild and furious face of poor Trollop, the madman.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted the maniac, as soon as he beheld him: "I have caught you at last—I have caught you at last. Now I'll have your blood!"

Mr. Fitzurse ran back into the dining-room; but the madman, brandishing an iron bar of one of the doors which he held in his hand, darted after him, the company rising and scattering before him in dismay. It was at the bridegroom alone, however, that the maniac aimed. His eyes were fixed upon him with wild, unnatural fire flashing from them, and he had chased the deceiver of his child half round the table, when, at the very same moment, poor Jane cast herself before him and clasped his knees, Mr. Fitzurse stumbled over the misplaced chair of Darius, and the arm of the madman descended, striking the head of the unfortunate fugitive with the iron bar that loaded it. There was a crash like that of a broken fence, the blood gushed from his mouth, ears, and nostrils, and down he fell prone upon his face, with his limbs quivering, and his feet beating the ground. A loud and piercing shriek came from the lips of the poor bride, and tighter still she clung to the knees of the maniac to prevent him from repeating the blow. At the same instant, Mr. Longshanks, Jerry Tripe, Mr. Rotundity, and two of the footmen, cast themselves upon the madman, wrenched the bar from his hands, and held his limbs firmly in their grasp, while others sprang forward to raise Mr. Fitzurse from the ground.

"Tie his arms with the napkins—tie his arms with the napkins," cried Mr. Longshanks.

"And his legs too," shouted one of the footmen, "for he's kicking me devilishly."

"I have killed him—I have killed him!" cried the madman, with a loud laugh of exultation. "That's done, and I'm satisfied. I should like to have some of his blood—let me have some of his blood!"

But they forcibly tied him hand and foot, and threw him down upon the ground, removing Jane in a fainting state, and placing her in an



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arm-chair. Mr. Longshanks then hurried towards Mr. Fitzurse, who was by this time raised from the ground, while the peer gazed at him in horror, and wrung his trembling hands.

"Carry him into the next room," cried the surgeon—"carry him into the next room, and lay him on the sofa; he may be only stunned—Why, what the devil is this?" he continued, starting back as he kicked his feet against a pair of legs in black silk stockings sticking out from below the table—"some d—d coward crept under the table! Pull him out—pull him out—pull him out by the heels!" and one of the men, seizing the legs, to the surprise of all, drew out the long and stately form of Mr. Darius, with a face which at first was excessively white, but soon turned excessively red.

"I dropped my snuff-box," he said; "that's the fact."

"Pooh!" said Tom Hamilton with a look of contempt, and followed the inanimata form of his unfortunate friend into the drawing-room.

They laid him upon a sofa, while almost all the male part of the lately gay party flocked in from the dining-room; and Mr. Longshanks, kneeling down put his hand upon the back of his head. Then lifting up his eyes towards the peer, he said to Tom Hamilton and the rest, "Take the old man away."

"No, no," cried the viscount. "I won't go—I can bear it—I deserve to bear it—I won't go. He is dying, Longshanks—he is dying, isn't he?"

Mr. Longshanks made no reply, but shook his head. "It is happy," he said, after a pause of more than a minute—"it is happy when death comes upon a bad man at the moment that he has taken some steps in a better path. God's mercy is infinite; we see his love towards us in all his works, we know by our own experience how often he forgives all our offences, and we may trust that 'the wicked man when he turneth away from the wickedness he hath committed, shall save his soul alive.'"

"Is he dead, then—is he dead?" asked the peer. "Can nothing be done?"

"His skull is fractured," replied Mr. Longshanks; "his brain is irreparably injured. He may live for a few minutes, but the fewer they are the better, for the life of life is at an end."

As he pronounced these sad and solemn words, a wild cry issued from the dining-room, and poor Jane, spite of all that could be done to detain her, rushed in, and cast herself upon her knees beside her expiring husband. She took the hand from which the warmth of life was departing, she covered it with her kisses, she dewed it with her tears. There was one in the world that loved him! but, in the simple words of the old ballad, "all would not avail." After they had stood round him for about ten minutes, and various things had been done by Mr. Longshanks to satisfy the unhappy father, the lips of the dying man murmured for a moment or two, but what were the words that he uttered no one heard. Jane started up, crying, "He speaks—he speaks! Do you not hear him? He is recovering! Hark! he is recovering!"

But at the same instant he gnashed his teeth sharply with a ghastly shudder, and the eyes opened, but the spirit was gone. In a moment after his bride was, to all appearance, as dead as she was, and those who were near bore her away to the chamber of her cold widowhood, while the father of the dead man sat down by his head and wept.

"This is a sad and terrible thing," said Tom Hamilton.

"It is indeed," said Mr. Longshanks. "Let it be as the voices of heaven to all that see it, warning them to repent while time is yet allowed them."

"Be comforted," said Harry Worrel, coming to the side of his uncle, and taking his hand with more tenderness than any thing but such misfortunes could have induced him to show towards one who had so cruelly treated his mother. "Be comforted."

"Oh, Harry Worrel, Harry Worrel!" said the old man, "had he been the best son, the best friend, the best man the world ever produced, I could be comforted. Doubtless, you think it is no great loss; but it is bitterer to me to see him lie there, and to know that he was what he was, than if I had lost all that could make a father's heart proud. Talk not to me of comfort. I have nothing before me, but as heretofore, to drown care, to forget sorrow, to stifle remorse. It is all in vain—it is all in vain. Give me a tumbler-full of wine, Jerry Tripe! This shall not get the better of me."

"Nay, nay," said Mr. Longshanks, interposing in a softer tone than he was accustomed to use, as the butler proceeded to obey his lord's injunctions. "Nay, nay; seek better comfort than that. Think of hereafter."

"What! think of that which shall condemn me?" cried the peer, angrily. "How shall I seek comfort there? Who will give it me? Will that man?" and he pointed to Dr. Hookham, who stood not far off. "Who can get comfort from such a thing as that? I will tell you what, Longshanks; a good clergyman is a blessing indeed—I am sure of it—I know it. If I had had one near me, I should have been a better man. But a bad one is a curse; and I have found it so. Give me the wine, Jerry!" and he drank the tumbler-full down, and then filled another. "There, go all away and leave me," he cried: "the wedding-day is over, the feast and the merriment at an end. Leave the old wretch in his den: there's none of you love me or care for me now. Harry Worrel, you are my heir, and the barony too goes in the female line; so, when you are Lord Fitzurse, and live in Outlook Castle, mind you behave better than I have done—Now go away with you all, and leave me to myself."

"I would fain stay with you, my dear lord," replied Worrel, kindly. "I am not only your heir, but your near relation—the only relation you have left, and I much wish to comfort and console you."

"You are a good boy, Harry," said the peer, shaking him by the hand, "and you shall come to me to-morrow. To-night it's of no use. So leave me to myself and my own ways, and go away all of you. Take the murderer with you, but don't do him any harm—mind you don't do him any harm, for he is mad, and was very badly used, poor

fellow! Give him a glass of wine, Jerry; tell him I sent it him. Curse me if I couldn't be a fool, and cry!" and casting himself down in a chair, he waved his hand to be left alone.

Slowly and one by one the guests departed; some seeking their horses, some taking their way on foot. The chevalier lingered the last, gazing thoughtfully upon the peer, with his arms crossed upon his chest. "What are you waiting for?" cried Lord Outrun, looking up. "Oh, I know what you are thinking of! To be bad is not to be mad, chevalier—would to God it was!—it is a step beyond madness, and a much worse step too. So now leave me."

"You are right, my lord," replied the chevalier, and withdrew.

CHAPTER LXXI.

HOW THE PEER CONSOLED HIMSELF FOR THE MISFORTUNES WHICH HAD BEFALLEN HIM—THE LAST FLARE-UP AT OUTRUN CASTLE.

THE sound of receding feet soon came to an end, the shouts and merriment that had been heard from the terrace and the park gradually subsided; a feeling of awe spread over the multitude which had been collected; the tables were left, and the people dispersed, moralizing deeply over that in which they saw the hand of retributive justice more, far more plainly, than if they had witnessed an execution under the arm of the law. Viscount Outrun remained for nearly half an hour in the chamber with the dead body, then starting suddenly up, he walked into the other room, where he found Tom Hamilton sitting at the still-spread table, with his elbows resting upon it and his hands covering his eyes.

Mr. Darius and Mr. Winterton had finished their dinner, and gone to play at backgammon in the library. Tom Hamilton did not look up when he heard the peer's step, and Lord Outrun, drawing a chair close to him, touched his arm, saying in a low tone—

"Tom, Tom, let us have some champagne—there's nothing for it but that."

"I can't," said Tom Hamilton, shaking his head. "Oh! my lord, this is a very terrible thing."

"That's the very reason, Tom," said the peer. "I must have some champagne, Tom, or I shall die, or cry, or something. Reach me that bottle out of the cooler."

Tom Hamilton did as he asked him, and Lord Outrun poured himself out a glass and drank it, and then poured one out for his companion, and insisted upon his taking it also.

"I feel very queer about the head, Tom," said the peer; and then

after a long pause he added—"I wonder what death is like?—and then what's to come after?—It's a strange thing, and does not do to think of." So he poured himself out another glass of champagne and swallowed that too.

A long pause then ensued, for in the mind of both there was more matter for musing than conversation. Still, thought—which is the solitude of the mind—was not pleasant to Lord Outram. He could not endure it, yet it pressed upon him; and often when his lips moved to speak, the mind was hurried on upon the course of reflection, like a boat carried by a strong stream beyond the place where those who guide it would wish to land. After some five minutes, however, he poured himself out another glass of the same wine, and drank it almost unconsciously.

"I say, Tom," he said at length, "suppose we do not do these things any more."

"I think it will be far better not, my lord," replied Tom Hamilton. "I for my part am resolved to leave off a great many things. No more, I thank you," he added, as the peer held out the bottle towards him. "Amongst other things, I will not get drunk any more."

"Drunk, Tom Hamilton!" exclaimed the peer; "I feel as if I could not get drunk, if I were to drink the cellar dry. I wish I could.—It's one's only resource at such a time as this."

"I have heard," replied Tom Hamilton, "that, as the old surgeon said just now, there are other resources, and better ones."

"Ay, ay, ay!" cried the peer; "that's for the future; but what's to be done for the present? If one were to go on thinking, it would destroy one;" and he applied himself to the bottle again.

"It is very strange, Tom Hamilton," continued the peer, "that I did not care half so much about poor Freddy's death when I thought he was fairly shot in a duel, as I do now when I have seen him knocked down, like an ox by a butcher.—It is very strange, indeed!"

"It is strange, my lord," replied his companion; "but yet you know we are more accustomed to duels, and that sort of thing; we talk of them more, hear of them more, think of them more; and that with which we are familiar, even if it be one of the shapes of death, loses a great part of its terrors.—Besides, this was a horrible piece of business."

"It was indeed," said the peer.

"To be killed upon one's wedding-day," continued Tom Hamilton, "at a merry dinner-party, by a maniac, whom one has driven mad by seducing his daughter!—It is very horrible!"

"Horrible indeed!" murmured the peer; and he took some more champagne.

"Do you know, my lord," said Mr. Hamilton, who thought the viscount was certainly drinking too much and too fast—"Do you know, my lord, I think it would be better for you to go to bed, and try to sleep. There are a great many sad things to be done, which I can do for you; and if you endeavour to get a good night's rest, you may wake to-morrow with a mind less oppressed, and more equal to the discussion of business."

"Well, I will, Tom—I will," replied Lord Outrun. "It is the best thing I can do—I will trust to you to manage matters for me—but I must have a glass of madeira before I go. By jingo! I must. I always wind up with madeira, you know, Tom.—Ring for Jerry Tripe, and I will go;" and at the same time the peer filled a tumbler three parts full of madeira, and drank it off at a draught.

The mind of man is a curious thing, and it is scarcely possible to tell, at times, what are the secret springs from which certain emotions arise. The words "By jingo!" so common in Lord Outrun's mouth, now struck Tom Hamilton more painfully, more horribly than many things perhaps of greater consequence would have done. There was a levity in them which was altogether discordant with the grave feelings of his own heart and with the profound grief which even the speaker endured, that made them harsh and irritating to his ear; and ringing the bell quickly, Jerry Tripe appeared in a moment.

"Bring me a light, Jerry," said his lord; "I am going to bed—come up and help me. Good night, Tom," and he held out his hand to his son's old friend.

There was scarcely a difference in the tone from that which he was accustomed to employ upon all ordinary occasions. The shock was evidently passing away, and Tom Hamilton mused for several minutes after he was gone, not without a moral effect.

"Pon my honour," he said to himself, "the sort of life which this old peer has been leading for so many years seems not only to wear away all principles, but even to deprive the natural affections of tone and strength. Nothing on earth appears to make any impression upon him for more than half an hour, or an hour at the farthest; and I have seen the same with many vicious old men.—It's worth while thinking of; for one wouldn't like to get into such a state oneself."

While he was thus thinking Lord Outrun walked soberly up stairs, with Jerry Tripe lighting him, his step being somewhat slow and feeble, but with no other indication of any change. At the top of the first landing he stopped and said:

"Is it lightning, Jerry?"

"No, my lord," replied the butler, "it's quite a clear night."

"I thought I saw a flash," said the peer. And he looked up the gallery towards the door of that room which was to have been his son's bridal chamber.

His heart was not altogether hard, though its sensibilities were worn out, and never had been very deep.

"I hope they have taken care of the poor girl," he said: "mind she's taken care of, Jerry."

As he spoke his eye rested on his sister's picture—the often-mentioned picture—taken in her masquerade costume. The memory of that sad dark night came upon him, and the angry passions of the past, and the horrors of the present became suddenly linked together by the magic of association. That the son of her whom he had struck and abused, whose heart he had trampled upon, whose life had withered away under his unkindness, should inherit all, and his own child,

brought up in indulgence and vice, should receive death as the punishment of his evil course, in the midst of rejoicing on his wedding-day, seemed a strange and a terrible thing, and he felt the hand of wrath upon him.

"Come, Jerry," he cried, "I shall go to bed—the sooner I'm asleep the better."

He soon changed his mind, however; for after Jerry had taken off his coat and waistcoat, and given him his dressing-gown and red night-cap, he said,—

"I don't like going to bed, either, Jerry.—There, give me down 'Rochester's Poems' from the shelf.—Light the rushlight, and put down the candle here."

"You had better go to bed, my lord," said Jerry.

"No, I won't, by jingo!" said the peer. "There, that 'll do.—Hang my night-shirt over the back of the chair near me."

Jerry did as he was bid, and then took his departure.

After he was gone Lord Outrun sat for about half an hour in his arm-chair, reading the evil book he had chosen. At the end of that time he laid it down, put his hand to his head and said:—

"How devilish giddy I am—I am sick at the stomach, too.—I'll ring, and have some brandy and water."

He rose for that purpose, but before he could reach the bell he reeled for a moment, his knees gave way under him, and he sunk down—slowly at first, but then with a heavy fall—and lay prone and senseless on the floor, with a loud and unnatural snoring issuing from his nostrils. As he fell his head struck the shade of the rushlight slightly, but sufficiently to knock it over, and it fell against the foot of the chair on which his night-shirt was hanging. The next minute there came a little smoke, and then a sudden flame caught the cloth, gave a flash, and went out again, caught it once more, and played flickering and uncertain upon the edge, then crept slowly up, devouring as it went—the image of vice creeping over the human mind—slow, silent, flickering, destructive, and in the end consuming all.

In the meanwhile Jerry Tripe had returned to the dining-room, where he found Tom Hamilton still alone.

"Jerry," said the gentleman as he entered, "I wish you would go and tell those two blackguards in the library, that it is not decent, on a night like this, to be amusing themselves with backgammon. They had better take themselves off to bed, or out of the castle altogether. The rattling of the dice-box annoys me."

Jerry Tripe did as Tom Hamilton told him, and Messrs. Winterton and Darius went to bed.

The worthy butler then returned, and Tom Hamilton said whenever he entered—

"Come, Jerry, there is much to be done. The first thing to-morrow, you must give notice to the coroner, and I suppose we had better leave the body where it is."

"Oh! certainly, Mr. Hamilton," said Jerry; "but had you not better write to the coroner, or go and see him?"

"I do not half like it," replied Tom Hamilton. "The share I had

in that mock inquest, Jerry, is not pleasant to me, now we have a real inquest to hold upon the same man. Come, let us take the candle and look at him for a moment."

Thus saying he proceeded into the other room with a slow and noiseless step.

Why is it we are so silent and still in the presence of the dead?—We cannot wake them from their calm and perfect sleep. Our sighs, our tears, the tread of beloved feet, the sound of voices that were once music to their ear, have no effect in breaking that grey, solemn slumber. No more would the heaviest footfall, or the loudest laugh; and yet we creep into the chamber of death as if fearful of interrupting the short repose of a sick infant.

There he lay as they had left him, with the blood looking the redder upon the ashy white of his countenance, but no other change in limb or feature. All was for ever at an end—the seal was set, the warrant of eternity signed, and the worm and the clay were all which would produce any alteration there.

"'Tis a sad sight," said Tom Hamilton: "'tis a sad sight, Jerry. Pray God his father may take this more to heart than he has taken other things, and that we may all receive it as a warning, and make a change."

"Amen!" said Jerry Tripe, aloud. "I am afraid, Mr. Hamilton, that we have all been in the wrong way."

"I fear so very much," said Tom Hamilton. "We have been dreaming, Jerry; but these things wake one. You had better set somebody to watch here, Jerry, and send off express for the coroner to-morrow. I will go to bed now, and be up early—but first take care that poor Mrs. Fitzurse has some one to sit up with her—she is in a terrible state, poor girl."

"Sally is with her, sir," said Jerry Tripe. "I went to see about her before I came back to you; my lord sent me."

"I am glad of that—I am very glad of that," said Tom Hamilton; "that shows some good feeling, at least."

"Oh! yes, sir," cried Jerry. "Oh! yes, he can be very kind when he likes it—I am sure I have cause to say so, who have served him from a boy, poor man," and Jerry's eyes grew moist.

Tom Hamilton turned slowly into the dining-room again, talked for about a quarter of an hour longer with Jerry Tripe, and then walked away to his own chamber. He returned almost immediately to the dining-room to tell the butler and a footman who was now there helping Jerry to remove the dinner things, that they had better look well over the house, as there was a smell of fire.

"Oh! sir," said the footman, "it is nothing but the bonfire which some of those boys lighted before they went away from the park; the wind has drifted the smoke into the windows."

"I dare say that is it," said Tom Hamilton, and thus satisfied he turned back to his own room. Tom Hamilton pulled off his clothes and went to bed, but he did not sleep. The excited brain would not give up its activity, thought followed thought, memory crossed memory, purpose struggled with purpose, and he lay gazing upon the darkness, and wishing that he had not gone to bed at all

His room was in a different angle of the house from that of the peer, turning to the left, by the small corridor, as you went up the great stairs—you recollect it quite well, dear reader, I dare say. However, that corridor ran round and formed a crooked line of communication—one side and two half sides of a parallelogram—so there was easy means of walking from one to the other.

Smoke, however is not of the same rapid propensities as steam, and it was about an hour and a half after Tom Hamilton had got into bed before he perceived that the smell of fire, which had caught his attention as he went up the stairs, had not only reached his own room, but was growing stronger and stronger. Tom at first thought that it was fancy, and he called himself a fool, and accused himself of being nervous. He turned round upon his side, and tried to fall asleep, but he soon became convinced that although there may occasionally be imaginations of the nose as well as of any other organ, his olfactory nerves were not deceiving him on the present occasion. As soon as he had quite convinced himself of this fact, as the reader may suppose, he started out of bed in a great hurry, determined to see with his own eyes what was the matter. As he did so he heard a low, rushing sound, like a strong wind, and by the time he had thrown on his dressing-gown, a crackling caught his ear. On opening his door he found the corridor filled with suffocating smoke, and more distinctly heard the sounds which had before caught his ear but faintly.

“By Jove the house is on fire!” he cried; “that is clear. Where can this be coming from? Hi! holla! fire! fire!”

“Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Hamilton,” shouted a voice from the end of the passage, which he recognised as that of Jerry Tripe, “the great corridor is full of fire—it’s coming from my lord’s room.”

“I thought so,” cried Tom Hamilton, running forward. “Quick! Carry Mrs. Fitzurse out of the house. Get up all the servants, and bring them up the great staircase.—Send them up with buckets to the fire tank. But first get out Mrs. Fitzurse.”

“But, my lord, my lord!” cried Jerry Tripe, who was well nigh in *puris naturabilis*.

“I will see after him,” cried Tom Hamilton. “Be quick! be quick! there is no time to be lost.”

Away ran Jerry Tripe, away ran Tom Hamilton—the former to call the other servants, most of whom were still asleep; the latter to waken Lord Outrun and save him from the flames. But when Tom Hamilton reached the end of the corridor leading to the peer’s room, a scene presented itself which almost daunted his courage. Volumes of thick smoke, through which it was impossible to see any thing at more than a few yards’ distance, were rolling down, tinted with a fiery red, while a flash broke across them every now and then, as if some sudden flame burst forth from time to time from some of the rooms beyond, while through the dense and suffocating vapour small spots and lines of fire appeared, running along the rich mouldings of the old oak wainscotings, and catching upon the elaborately carved wreaths which ornamented the panneling.

He paused for a single instant, then rushed forward into the smoke, caught the pulley of the alarm bell, and rang a loud, quick peal. Nearly opposite was the door of the viscount's room, and, to Tom Hamilton's sincere joy, he saw that it offered no appearance of fire, though from another, some ten yards beyond, the flame was flashing forth fiercely.

"I thought that further room was uninhabited," he said to himself, as he rushed across towards Lord Outrun's chamber, and threw the door wide open. But there, as soon as he had done so, the whole burst upon his sight.

The fire had spread from that which it had first caught to the curtains of the bed, thence to the cornices, thence to the door leading into the neighbouring room, thence, after smouldering for some time, to the room beyond itself, and a window there having been accidentally left open, the whole was speedily in a blaze, the door leading into the corridor consumed, and a thorough draught established, adding tenfold intensity to the flames. Thus, the whole of that chamber was on fire in every part, while that of the viscount, though filled with smoke, and with the bedding still smouldering, was comparatively free.

Lord Outrun himself still lay exactly where he had fallen: one part of his dressing-gown had been on fire, but had gone out, and his white hair was singed; but these were the only marks of fire upon him; and Tom Hamilton tried to rouse him, and raise him from the floor. To his surprise, he found him stiff and cold.

Strong as he was, it was with difficulty he lifted the body of the bulky old man; but at length, scorched with the heat, and half smothered with the smoke, he carried it through the blazing corridor to the top of the stairs. There, however, he met two footmen running up with buckets full of water, while others were seen in the hall below, rushing hither and thither in all the frantic absurdities of fear. Jerry Tripe was up in a moment after, saying, as soon as he saw Tom Hamilton, "She is safe, she is safe, poor girl! But she says she would rather die."

Great difficulty was now found in giving order and regularity to the people of the house; and much time was lost, in spite of all Tom Hamilton could do, while the fire made head in every direction. Water, too, was not easily procured, for the direct way to the tank was cut off, and it could only be reached by a back staircase of stone; and very soon the upper story also caught the flames, and the flooring of some of the rooms fell in.

It now became evident that the house could not be saved, and Tom Hamilton, with the servants, applied themselves to carrying out the pictures, books, furniture, and plate. Before this could be accomplished, the flames were bursting from every window, the whole park around was illuminated, the deer bounded away in terror, and the startled oxen gazed and tossed their heads at the unwonted sight.

The village of Outrun was soon alarmed, and down came trooping in multitudes the same busy, idle crowd which had surrounded that house not many hours before, to take part in the festivities of the wedding of the heir; and now they found father and son together, lying dead upon the terrace before the house, with the unhappy bride a

